BAHA'I HISTORY

JANUARY

HTTPS://WWW.REDDIT.COM/R/ONTHISDATEINBAHAI/

☐ Table of Contents

1. January 1. On this date in 1958, the Hands of the Cause of God sent a cable calling for the suspension of religious festivities for a period of nine months from the day of Shoghi Effendi's death. (was #191)

2. January 1. On this date in 2004, the Bahá'í World News Service reported on a "a six-day gathering to inspire Baha'i youth...held at the Townshend International School" in Hluboká nad Vltavou in the Czech Republic. (was #190)

3. January 1. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later included in "Bahá'í Administration," telling the Bahá'ís in the Soviet Union to "unreservedly" submit to "state orders" banning Bahá'í activities and assemblies. (was #189)

4. January 1. On this date in 1971, Hand of the Cause of God Agnes Baldwin Alexander died. (was #188)

5. January 1. On this date in 1912, Alí-Muhammad Varqá, the longest surviving Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Tehran. From 1955 until his death he was also the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu'lláh, a position he inherited after the death of his father Valíyu'lláh, who had served as Trustee from 1938 to 1955 (was #187)

6. Baha'i History - January 1, 1962 , Amelia Collins, a Hand of the Cause of God, died in Haifa, Israel. She donated vast sums of her husband's mining fortunes to several projects at the Bahá'í World Centre, and the Collins Gate at Bahji is named after her. (was #186)

7. January 1. On this date in 2003, the Bahá'í World News Service reported a marathon in Bangalore, India, "which aimed to raise awareness about human rights abuses in Iran." (was #185)

8. January 2. On this date in 1923, over one year after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi wrote his first letter to Canadian Bahá'ís. (was #184)

9. Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1851, the Bábi insurrection in Zanjan came to an end with the insurgents' imprisonment. (was #183)

10. Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1986, the UHJ wrote "the Conference attained such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy...Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis." (was #182)

11. January 2. On this date in 1991, the Universal House of Justice responded to an individual who proposed "for a number of changes to Bahá'í electoral, judicial and reviewing procedures." (was #181)

12. January 2. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote "For the last two years there has been a decline in the amount of contributions to the international funds of the Faith, and we note that many national funds also are facing the danger of deficits..Most urgently, may every believer give sacrificially.. (was #180)

13. January 2. On this date in 2002, an individual wrote the UHJ asking "for assistance in reconciling various statements from the Writings that seem to contradict each other...and draws attention to two or more apparently contradictory quotations on six different subjects." (was #179)

14. Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1902, Julius Edwards, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Northern Territories Protectorate, was born in Jamaica. (was #178)

15. Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "...you can see that it is impossible for the Jews to be forgotten in a Bahá'í context. The blessings which will be conferred upon them for what has occurred in the Holy Land in this new dispensation will become increasingly evident." (was #177)

16. Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to "Bahá'ís of the World" announcing the opening of the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era. (was #176)

17. January 3. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote an individual "now having to face and resolve problems" noting "It is true that Bahá'u'lláh lays on every Bahá'í the duty to teach His Faith. At the same time, however, we are forbidden to proselytize, so it is important for all believers to ..." (was #175)

18. Baha'i History - January 3. On this date in 2011, the NSA of the U.S. sent a message to American Bahá'ís addressing homosexuality and civil rights. (was #174)

19. January 3. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and one in London, England. (was #173)

20. January 3. On this date in 1914, David Ruhe, a member of the UHJ from 1968 to 1993, was born. According to one source, the Ruhi Institute was named after him as well as after the father of Farzam Arbab, who founded the Ruhi Institute and served on the UHJ from 1993 to 2013. (was #172)

21. Baha'i History - January 3. On this date in 1979, the Universal House of Justice wrote the "Participants in the Bahá'í Studies Seminar held in Cambridge" regarding Bahá'í scholarship and the need for pre-publication review. (was #171)

22. January 3. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote "The Covenant is the 'axis of the oneness of the world of humanity' because it preserves the unity and integrity of the Faith itself ...to accept Bahá'u'lláh is to accept His Covenant; to reject His Covenant is to reject Him." (was #170)

23. January 3. On this date in 1922, 35 days after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was officially read in public. (was #169)

24. January 4. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice wrote all NSAs marking the commencement of construction projects on Mount Carmel. (was #168)

25. January 4. On this date in 1913, Malietoa Tanumafili II was born. He was the first head of state and reigning constitutional monarch to convert to the Bahá'í Faith. (was #167)

26. January 4. On this date in 1908, Helen Mirrell Goodall, later named a Disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and her daughter Ella Goodall Cooper arrived in Acre to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908". (was #166)

27. January 4. On this date in 1936, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "...the obligatory prayers are by their very nature of greater effectiveness and are endowed with a greater power than the non-obligatory ones, and as such are essential." (was #165)

28. January 5. On this date in 1926, the eminent British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne died. He published numerous articles and books of academic value, including accounts of early Bábí and Bahá'í history, and was the only Westerner to meet Bahá'u'lláh and leave a description of the experience. (was #164)

29. January 5. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to European Bahá'ís announcing the upcoming visit of Abd al-Hosayn Ayati (known as Avarih, literally "the Wanderer") a Baha'i missionary, journalist, author and teacher who spent 18 years as missionary. (was #163)

30. January 5. On this date in 1927, Suhayl 'Alá'í was born. An early pioneer to Samoa, he served on LSAs in Samoa, the U.S. and Australia, on the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific, the NSA of Samoa, as a Counsellor for Australasia, and as the liaison between Malietoa and the UHJ. (was #162)

31. January 5. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question concerning the passage in 'Seven Valleys' referring to pre-existence. This in no way presupposes the existence of the individual soul before conception. The term has not been absolutely accurately translated...." (was #161)

32. January 6. On this date in 1932, Catherine Heward Huxtable, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Gulf Islands and pioneer to Regina, Saskatchewan and St. Helena, was born. (was #160)

33. January 6. On this date in 1987, the UHJ wrote "Concerning the question as to how the term "Persian believer" should be defined ...In cases where children born to such parents are brought up in the Persian tradition, speak Persian, and are thoroughly conversant with the laws of the Kitábi-Aqdas... (was #159)

34. January 6. On this date in 1957, Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím sent a cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran, advising pioneers to "scatter to make new centers" and "not to gather in one place but to scatter in different places." (was #158)

35. January 6. On this date in 2016, Maliheh Afnan, a great-granddaughter of Bahá'u'lláh and a renowned artist, died in London at the age of 80. (was #157)

36. January 6. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote an American local assembly "I feel that sooner or later the secret of this unbounded love must appear and that great continent so near and dear to His heart, must soon unfold itself entirely to the glory of His Revelation." (was #156)

37. January 7. On this date in 1979, Denis MacEoin wrote a "Letter on Bahá'í attitudes towards politics and scholarship" published in the Los Angeles Bahá'í Study Class Newsletter, volume 34, pages 4-12. (was #155)

38. January 7. On this date in 1913, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to the Esperanto Society in Edinburgh stating "... Esperanto ... We have commanded all the Bahá’ís in the Orient to study this language...for it will hasten the coming of that Day, that Millennial Day, foretold by prophets and seers..." (was #154)

39. January 7. On this date in 1922, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament was publicly read. Although in the Kitáb-i-'Ahd Bahá'u'lláh designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's successor, in his Will, 'Abdu'l-Bahá establishes the institution of the Guardianship. (was #153)

40. January 7. On this date in 1999, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a reference to the Zoroastrian text Dinkird, or "Acts of the Religion" (dín-kird) in John Ferraby's "All Things Made New", and on the authenticity of the Zoroastrian scriptures. (was #152)

41. January 7. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice cabled all NSAs regarding the Conference on Ḥuqúqu’lláh. (was #151)

42. January 7. On this date in 1975, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "enquiring about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer." (was #150)

43. January 7. On this date in 1922, "Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, cabled the Bahá'ís of Iran telling them that Shoghi Effendi was the centre of the Cause; the Bahá'í community of the United States was cabled nine days later on 16 January 1922." (was #149)

44. January 7. On this date in 1996, Mary Zabolotny McCulloch, Knight of Baha'u'llah for Anticosti Island, died. (was #148)

45. January 8. On this date in 1918, W. Wilson addressed Congress with his Fourteen Points. 'Abdu'l-Bahá would write "As to President Wilson, the fourteen principles which he hath enunciated are mostly found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and I therefore hope that he will be confirmed and assisted." (was #147)

46. January 8. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled a British teaching conference "BRITISH BAHA'I PIONEERS MAGNIFICENT SUCCESS HISTORIC ENTERPRISE LAUNCHED AFRICAN CONTINENT COURSE TWO YEAR PLAN FORMULATED BRITISH BAHA'I COMMUNITY. GOALS FIRST EPOCH-MAKING STAGE GLORIOUS OVERSEAS MISSION..." (was #146)

47. January 8. On this date 2000, the UHJ wrote "Why..has this society been impotent? The answer to this question, as amply evidenced by decades of contentious history, cannot be found in political passion, conflicting expressions of class interest, or technical recipes..." (was #145)

48. January 8. On this date in 1901, May Ellis Bolles wrote Agnes Baldwin Alexander a letter stating "Praise be God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth..." (was #144)

49. January 8. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "There is no time to lose. A great responsibility rests on the elected representatives of the most envied community in the Bahá'í world...countless favors showered upon it by 'Abdu'l-Bahá..." (was #143)

50. January 8. On this date in 1924, Hushmand Fatheazam was born. He served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India from 1955 to 1963 when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice where he served until retiring in 2003. (was #142)

51. January 8. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that the great failure to respond to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions released forces, which must culminate in a still more violent upheaval and agony. The thing is out of hand, so to speak, and it is too late to avert catastrophic trials." (was #141)

52. January 8. On this date in 1925, W. Smith Murray, who was then in charge of the U.S. Consulate in Tehran, wrote to Secretary of State Hughes on the Bahá'ís in the Middle East, the "Imbrie affair," the character of the Bahá'ís, and the possibility of the Faith's spread in Persia. (was #140)

53. January 9. On this date in 1985, a Unitarian Universalist minister wrote "to express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection was not acceptable ..." (was #139)

54. January 9. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi sent an English message to the Bahá'ís of India "Remembering, however, the few among my friends in that land who are as yet unfamiliar with the Persian Tongue." (was #138)

55. January 9. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi appointed the International Bahá'í Council, with Charles Mason Remey as President of the Council. After Shoghi Effendi's death, Remey would put forth the claim that with this appointment , Shoghi Effendi had implicitly named him the second Guardian. (was #137)

56. January 9. On this date in 1922, William Hoar, a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and one of the first Americans to become a member of the Bahá'í Faith, died of myocarditis six weeks after hearing the news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death. (was #136)

57. January 9. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote the Conference of the Continental Board of Counsellors regarding the upcoming Five Year Plan of the worldwide Bahá'í community. (was #135)

58. January 9. On this date in 1983, Juan Cole wrote it was "... dishonest to delete passages from manuscripts when they are published, whether in the original or in translation, and no matter how temporarily" in regards to the deletion of "objectionable passages" in "My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh" (was #134)

59. January 9. On this date in 1983, Juan Cole wrote it was "... dishonest to delete passages from manuscripts when they are published, whether in the original or in translation, and no matter how temporarily" in regards to the deletion of "objectionable passages" in "My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh" (was #133)

60. January 9. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "The unmarried homosexual is therefore in the same position as anyone else who does not marry.....by overcoming them we achieve our moral and spiritual development...God tests His servants." (was #132)

61. January 9. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi announced "Fulfillment of prophecies uttered by Founder of Faith and Center of His Covenant culminating in establishment of Jewish State, signalizing birth after lapse of two thousand years of an independent nation in the Holy Land." (was #131)

62. January 9. On this date in 1914, John Ferraby, a Custodian, was born. His "All Things Made New" is notable for the changes made to it: The dedication of the book to "The First Guardian" changed to simply "The Guardian", references to "the Guardian" replaced with "the Universal House of Justice." (was #130)

63. January 10. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences took place, one in Toronto, Canada, and another in Guadalajara, Mexico. (was #129)

64. January 10. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The instructions that accompany these prayers...have been definitely ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, and as such should be entirely and confidently carried out by the believers, and particularly by the Bahá'í youth..." (was #128)

65. January 10. On this date in 2006, an individual wrote the NSA of the U.S. regarding "its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press" which it said "include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith." (was #127)

66. January 10. On this date in 1978, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Germany "if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it." (was #126)

67. January 10. On this date in 1988, the UHJ published a memorandum regarding Táhirih and women's suffrage. An influential Bábi theologian, she abandoned and shunned most of her family, stating "He, in that he rejects God's religion, is unclean; between us there can be naught in common." (was #125)

68. January 10. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding association with Oriental travelers and residents...vital necessity for the exercise in these days of the greatest vigilance and reserve, prudence and caution, on the part of the American believers in their dealings with them." (was #124)

69. January 10. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "the Formative Period of our Faith...synchronizes with a period of deepening gloom, of universal impotence, of ever-increasing destitution and wide-spread disillusionment in the fortunes of a declining age." (was #123)

70. January 10. On this date in 1954, Dorothy Beecher Baker, a Hand of the Cause of God, died in a plane crash. (was #122)

71. January 11. On this date on 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of Persia "... if they are successfully to traverse these last remaining stages, and witness, at the highest levels ... the realization of their profoundest hopes and of their most deeply cherished desires." (was #121)

72. January 11. On this date in 1980, the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land addressed a letter to the Hands of the Cause of God throughout the world, later published in the May 1980 Bahá'í News, giving an account of the murder of Enoch Olinga on September 16, 1979. (was #120)

73. January 11. On this date on 1971, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'u'lláh is able to open doors and change conditions in ways far beyond our understanding...power of Bahá'u'lláh to reinforce the efforts of those who serve Him, of His promise to do so, and of the impotence of all our deeds without this divine.." (was #119)

74. January 11. On this date on 1942 Shoghi Effendi wrote "the whole theory of Divine Revelation rests on the infallibility of the Prophet, be He Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, or one of the others. If they are not infallible, then They are not Divine, and thus lose that essential link with God..." (was #118)

75. January 11. On this date on 2014, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice expressing "concern about the challenge Bahá'ís encounter in understanding and upholding the Teachings in the face of powerful social forces influencing public attitudes towards homosexuality." (was #117)

76. January 12. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote the Deputies and Representatives of the institution of Ḥuqúqu'lláh "you are assisting in the advancement of a process which will, in the centuries ahead, give rise to a transformation of society far beyond our present capacity to comprehend." (was #116)

77. January 12. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote "The institution of Huqúqu'lláh will, during the course of this Dispensation, contribute to the spiritualization of humanity through the promotion of a new attitude to the acquisition and use of material resources." (was #115)

78. January 12. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the Friends' Meeting House, St. Martin's Lane, London. (was #114)

79. January 12. On this date in 1853, subsequent to the failed assassination attempt of the Naser al-Din Shah Qajar by some Bábis, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from Iran to Baghdad accompanied by some of his family and an entourage of Russian guards. (was #113)

80. January 12. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote "it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome." (was #112)

81. January 12. On this date in 2006, the UHJ wrote, "the authority of letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi...there is no justification for summarily dismissing the authoritative guidance contained in this body of correspondence." (was #111)

82. January 12. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering." (was #110)

83. January 13. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "He was sorry to hear that the piece of plaster from the walls of the Prison of Mah-ku had not been placed in the grave of Mr. Maxwell; and he would like the National Assembly, with the greatest of care, to see that somehow..." (was #109)

84. January 13. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "in view of the fact that Anticosti is so extremely difficult to get into, the Canadian Assembly can choose some other goal as substitute for Anticosti. In other words, a territory or an island in the vicinity of Canada ...." (was #108)

85. January 13. On this date in 1922, "The Palestine Post" carried an article titled "Bahaists Seek to Proselytize Persian Jews" opening with the words "A warning has been issued by the Chief Rabbinate here to the Persian Jews against the recent widespread missionary activity of the Bahaists ..." (was #107)

86. January 13. On this date in 1922, "The Palestine Post" carried an article titled "Bahaists Seek to Proselytize Persian Jews" opening with the words "A warning has been issued by the Chief Rabbinate here to the Persian Jews against the recent widespread missionary activity of the Bahaists ..." (was #106)

87. January 13. On this date in 1943, Kiser Barnes, later a member of the Universal House of Justice, was born in Baltimore, Maryland. (was #105)

88. January 13. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "if an avowed follower of Bahá'u'lláh were to immerse himself in, and fathom the depths of, the ocean of these heavenly teachings.. life, materially, intellectually and spiritually, will be safe from toil and trouble... sadness or despondency (was #104)

89. January 13. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote "The remainder (of pioneers) are urged to arise as quickly as possible before the confusion and chaos which are engulfing the old order disrupt transportation and communications and cause doors which are now open to be closed in our faces." (was #103)

90. January 13. On this date in 1978, the UHJ wrote the NSA of India "Bahá'ís may receive contributions from non-Bahá'ís for charitable activities whose beneficiaries are non-Bahá'ís as well...the acceptance of funds from any source should in no way affect the school's direction and policy." (was #102)

91. January 13. On this date in 1961, the Bahá'í Temple in Kampala, Uganda, which had been designed by Charles Mason Remey, was dedicated. (was #101)

92. January 13. On this date in 1931, Albert Schwarz, an early German Bahá'í who served as the inaugural Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria when it was established in 1922, died. He served on that body as Chairman until his death. (was #100)

93. January 14. On this date in 1958, Paul E. Haney, Horace Holley, and Corinne True wrote a letter about Ahmad Sohrab and the New History Society, concluding "that activities conducted by Ahmad Sohrab through the New History Society are to be considered as entirely independent of the Cause..." (was #99)

94. January 14. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The believers ought to give the Message even to those who do not seem to be ready for it, because they can never judge the real extent to which the Word of God can influence the hearts and minds of the people ..." (was #98)

95. January 14. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote an individual who had "requested a specific list of human rights that Bahá'ís believe in" including "an enclosure with extracts on the subject of human rights." (was #97)

96. January 14. On this date in 1973, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum left Goma in the Congo and entered Rwanda, accompanied by Ola Pawlowska, during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's "The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum". (was #96)

97. January 14. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice sent a cablegram announcing the purchase of Abdullah Pasha's mansion in Acre, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá lived and Shoghi Effendi was born. (was #95)

98. January 14. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh married the first and second wives while He was still in Tihrán, and the third wife while He was in Baghdád. At that time, the Laws of the "Aqdas" had not been revealed..." (was #94)

99. January 14. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the existing religions of the world...have no coherent program upon which they are united, the Movement is rich with the very spirit and teachings the world needs for solving its present international problems...." (was #93)

100. January 14. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "With the appearance of every Revelation a new insight is created in man and this in turn expresses itself in the growth of science...With the spiritual awakening of man this force will develop and marvelous results will become manifest." (was #92)

101. January 14. On this date in 1870, May Maxwell was born in Englewood, New Jersey. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell who designed the Shrine of the Báb and was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. (was #91)

102. January 15. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In accordance with the explicit text of the Will and Testament, Huqúqu'lláh should be expended on teaching the Cause of God in countries throughout the East and the West, establishing institutions, building Bahá'í Temples and promoting ..." (was #90)

103. January 15. On this date in 1950, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States instituted the first celebration of World Religion Day to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting. World Religion Day is observed annually on the third Sunday in January. (was #89)

104. January 15. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote World War II "will throw down the barriers that hinder the emergence of that world community which the World Religion of Bahá'u'lláh has anticipated and can alone permanently establish." (was #88)

105. January 15. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote the U.S. entry into World War II "marks a milestone on the road which must lead the peoples of the North American continent to the glorious destiny that awaits them." (was #87)

106. January 15. On this date in 1998, Artemus Lamb, an American Bahá'í who pioneered to South and Central America, and served as a Counsellor from 1968 to 1985, died in El Salvador. (was #86)

107. January 16. On this date in 1922, Bahíyyih Khánum cabled the Bahá'í community of the United States notifying it "In Will Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of Cause and Head of House of Justice. Inform American friends." (was #85)

108. January 16. On this date in 1922, less than two months after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine, who would recognize its receipt in a letter addressed to Shoghi Effendi one week later, on January 24, 1922. (was #84)

109. January 16. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote "to the Bahá'ís of the World" regarding the beginning of the fifth epoch of the Formative Age. (was #83)

110. January 16. On this date in 1931, the dome of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, which was nearing completion, caught fire. Wilmette and Evanston firefighters worked to save the structure, and damage was estimated at $50,000. The temple was eventually dedicated on May 2, 1953. (was #82)

111. January 17. On this date in 2009, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences took place, one in Lae, Papua New Guinea, another in Vancouver, Canada, and another in Managua, Nicaragua. (was #81)

112. January 17. On this date in 1908, Ruth Katherine Meyer was born. She would be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to Margarita Island in 1953. (was #80)

113. January 17. On this date in 1961, court-appointed experts in Turkey agreed that the Bahá'í Faith was not a "Tarighat". In 1905, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote the sultan a letter protesting that his followers refrain from involvement in partisan politics and that his tariqa had guided many Americans to Islam. (was #79)

114. January 17. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "It is not within the spirit of Bahá'í law for one to become involved in the announcement of new marriage plans while he or she is still legally married to another. There is no objection to urging the friends not to go so far as to ..." (was #78)

115. January 17. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Australia "The Laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas regarding the period of engagement have not been made applicable to believers in the West, and therefore there is no requirement that the parties to a marriage obtain consent of the parents before... (was #77)

116. January 17. On this date in 1958, the Brisbane Telegraph carried an article about the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár noting "The Sydney House of Worship will be the third built by the Faith, which has 8 million followers in 3,700 localities in the world." (was #76)

117. January 17. On this date in 2003 the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "To the Bahá'ís of the World" providing an update on the progress of first Five Year Plan of the Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era. (was #75)

118. January 18. On this date in 2026, the third Sunday in January, Bahá'ís worldwide celebrate World Religion Day ("a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself") to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting. (was #74)

119. January 18. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote Elsa Grossmann, noting "It seems now absolutely certain that our dear Bahá'í sister, Lydia Zamenhof, lost her life in a gas-chamber during the war!" (was #73)

120. January 18. On this date in 1953, a letter written by Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, later referenced in a Bahai News article in March 1953, defined the terms "Age" and "Epoch." (was #72)

121. January 18, 2001, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article titled "Baha'i Chair at Hebrew University hosts conference on modern religions" noting the conference was "co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities and Landegg Academy." (was #71)

122. January 18. On this date in 2019, the UHJ wrote "Thus do the forces of disintegration regroup and gain ground. So be it. The unification of humanity is unstoppable by any human force; the promises made by the prophets of old and by the Author of the Cause of God Himself testify to this truth." (was #70)

123. January 18, On this date in 1922, an American Bahá'í wrote Shoghi Effendi "As you know we are having great troubles and sorrows with violators in the Cause in America. This poison has penetrated deeply among the friends." (was #69)

124. January 18. On this date in 1968, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "As a general rule the friends should not seek out contacts among Orientals (i.e., those of Muslim background from the Middle East, Pakistan and India), whether students or not." (was #68)

125. January 19. On this date in 1880, Ruth Moffett was born. She would become one of the outstanding traveling speakers for the religion who is known to have aided the founding of Bahá'í communities. (was #67)

126. January 19. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...according to the explicit text of the Aqdas, capital punishment is permitted, but also an alternative has been definitely provided whereby the rigours of such a condemnation can be seriously mitigated. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a choice ..." (was #66)

127. January 19. On this date in 2007, an article titled "Lots of Parties, a War, Some Bad Press and an Astounding Garden Terrace" appeared in Haaretz featuring the retirement of Bahá'í International Community deputy secretary-general Murray Smith. (was #65)

128. January 19. On this date in 1908, Helen Mirrell Goodall and her daughter Ella Goodall Cooper "left the Holy Land, our spiritual Home, to enter the world again." They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908." (was #64)

129. January 19. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote, "Concerning the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of the world government, the House of Justice fully agrees with your view that the Bahá'ís must now do all in their power to promote this transition." (was #63)

130. January 19. On this date in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (née Mary Sutherland Maxwell) died in Haifa, at the home, originally a residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where she had resided since 1937 when she married Shoghi Effendi. She was buried adjacent to the home. (was #62)

131. January 20. On this date in 1922, Roy Fernie was born in the Panama Canal Zone. The only son of Evelyn Granthame-Hayes and Cyril Fernie, the owner of the C. Fernie Steamship Company, he would later be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Gilbert and Ellis Islands. (was #61)

132. January 20. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "For the history of the Cause, particularly in Persia, is a clear illustration of the truth that such persecutions invariably serve to strengthen the believers in their faith, by stimulating the spiritual powers latent in their hearts..." (was #60)

133. January 20. On this date in 1922, American Bahá'í's cabled Shoghi Effendi "American rejoices appointment offers you its devoted services co-operation." His wife notes "After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa." (was #59)

134. January 20. On this date in 1882, Bahá'u'lláh wrote the "Tablet of Maqṣúd". On May 1, 2001, the Universal House of Justice replied "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia." (was #58)

135. January 20. On this date in 1905, Artemus Lamb, an American Bahá'í who pioneered to South and Central America, and served as a Counsellor from 1968 to 1985, was born in Iowa. (was #57)

136. January 21. On this date in 2015, an individual wrote the UHJ about "interlinear editions of Baha´i´ Writings" receiving the reply that these "are unnecessary for Baha´i´s, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation." (was #56)

137. January 21. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi met with David Ben Gurion. In the chapter titled "The Heart and Nerve Centre" in her book "The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith", Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting. (was #55)

138. January 21. On this date in 1914, Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl-i-Gulpáygání, noted Bahá'í scholar in the time of Bahá'u'lláh, died in Cairo, Egypt. One of the few Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh who never actually met Bahá'u'lláh, he chose the alias Abu'l-Fadl (progenitor of virtue) for himself. (was #54)

139. January 21. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "anniversaries of the birth and the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá, must be observed by the friends coming together, but work is not prohibited." (was #53)

140. January 21. On this date in 1923, Brigitte Hasselblatt, who would pioneer to Sweden, Denmark and Estonia and be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands, was born. (was #52)

141. January 21. On this date in 1922, two months after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi wrote his first letter to American Bahá'ís. (was #51)

142. January 22. On this date in 1872, in 'Akká, a group of Bahá'ís, including Salmání, killed three Azalís (Siyyid Muhammad Isfahání, Áqá Ján Ka'j Kuláh and another person). (was #50)

143. January 22. On this date in 1992, an individual wrote the UHJ, who later responded that "The House of Justice was sorry to learn from your letter that your son has recently informed you that he is a homosexual...You will, no doubt, want to urge your son to seek appropriate counseling..." (was #49)

144. January 22. On this date in 1976, the Universal House of Justice wrote that "The important thing is to impress upon Bahá'í children that personal friendship and individual companionship with children of Covenant-breakers must be avoided." (was #48)

145. January 22. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi finished writing "God Passes By". Published later that year, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb in 1844, "God Passes By" serves as a historical review by Shoghi Effendi of the first century of the Bahá'í Faith. (was #47)

146. January 22. On this date in 1984, the UHJ reiterated the figure of 20,000 for the number of early Babi/Bahá'í martyrs as 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi mentioned numerous times. Some historians estimate the number of early Babi/Bahá'í martyrs was not 20,000, but 2,000 to 3,000. (was #46)

147. January 23. On this date in 1924, Shoghi Effendi wrote Queen Marie of Romania "I am deeply touched by the splendid appreciation Your Majesty has graciously penned for the Bahá'í World, and wish to offer my heartfelt and abiding gratitude for this striking evidence of Your Majesty's sustained ..." (was #45)

148. January 23. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "HEARTILY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES TENACITY MODESTY UNWAVERING DEVOTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE HOWEVER DESIGNATE HER MARTYR." (was #44)

149. January 23. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "we cannot be sure how much or how little of the four Gospels are accurate and include the words of Christ and His undiluted teachings, all we can be sure of...is that what has been quoted by Bahá'u'lláh and the Master...absolutely authentic." (was #43)

150. January 23. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter addressed "To all National Spiritual Assemblies" concerning Bahá'í activities for the International Year of Peace declared by the United Nations, in anticipation of the permanent peace of the world which 'Abdu'l-Bahá ha (was #42)

151. January 23. On this date in 2012, Maryam Valapour gave a talk at the Ezri Center for Iran & Persian Gulf Studies at the University of Haifa titled "Applying Bahai Principles to Address Current Ethics and Policy Debates in Organ Transplantation." (was #41)

152. January 23. On this date in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (née Mary Sutherland Maxwell) was buried in Haifa, adjacent to the home, originally a residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where she had resided since 1937 when she married Shoghi Effendi. (was #40)

153. January 23. On this date in 1945, on this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi advised about individuals who "should be shunned by their fellow-Bahá'ís" noting "that some people are spiritually sick and that their disease is, alas, contagious...grave danger of contagion...their perversity and waywardness. (was #39)

154. January 24. On this date in 2009, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, one in Sydney, Australia, and one in Madrid, Spain. (was #38)

155. January 24. On this date in 1922, Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine, addressed a letter to Shoghi Effendi proclaiming "I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement." (was #37)

156. January 24. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote that an individual "cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society ... he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith." (was #36)

157. January 24. On this date in 2002, Palle Bischoff died. He was the first Danish Bahá'í to become a Baha'i in Denmark and the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Greenland. He also served on the NSA of Scandinavia and Finland as Vice-Chair and the NSA of Denmark. (was #35)

158. January 25. On this date in 2019, the board of directors of the Baha'i International Development Organization held its first meeting. (was #34)

159. January 25. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There are practically no technical teachings on economics in the Cause, such as banking, the price system, and others. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a few basic principles which should guide future Bahá'í economists..." (was #33)

160. January 25. On this date in 2005, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the members of the International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh prior to their inaugural meeting. (was #32)

161. January 25. On this date in 2001, the Ontario Human Rights Commission asked to investigate a case of alleged discrimination "Dr. Benjamin Todd Lawson believes he was denied a permanent tenured position with the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies because he's a member of the Baha'i faith. (was #31)

162. January 26. On this date in 2000, Adib Teherzadeh, a member of the UHJ since 1988, died. He was previously a member of the NSA of the British Isles from 1960 to 1971 and later of the NSA of the Republic of Ireland from 1972 to 1976, when he was appointed a Counsellor for Europe. (was #30)

163. January 26. On this date in 1949, Denis MacEoin was born. A former Bahá'í who was active from about 1966 to about 1980, he departed after clashes with the Bahá'í administration mostly due to his research works on Babism. He is a pro-Israel activist in Britain who writes for the Jerusalem Post. (was #29)

164. January 26. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote Kaukab H. A. MacCutcheon, answering a list of questions addressing such topics as Guardian Angels, "Approximately six thousand years elapsed since the appearance of Adam," and "The provision in the 'Aqdas' regarding the use of glass coffins." (was #28)

165. January 26. On this date in 1958, during the Kampala International Conference, the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of Africa (which was designed by Charles Mason Remey) was laid. Ruhiyyih Khanum gave a tribute to Shoghi Effendi, who had died shortly before the Kampala International Conference. (was #27)

166. January 27. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice received a letter regarding the promotion of world peace, in anticipation of the Lesser Peace which was to be established prior to the year 2000. (was #26)

167. January 27. On this date in 2017, Fred Schechter died. Named a Knight of Baha'u'llah for French Somaliland, he also travelled as a pioneer to several countries in Latin America and served thirteen years as a Continental Counsellor in the Americas and served on the International Teaching Centre. (was #25)

168. January 27. On this date in 1920, Jospeh Hannen died. An early American Bahá'í who was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi, he was an integral member of the Washington Bahá'í community, served on Bahá’í Temple Unity, and took notes of many of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's talks. (was #24)

169. January 27. On this date in 2004, three medical experts wrote The Guardian newspaper that it is highly improbable that the primary cause of Dr. Kelly's death was hemorrhage from transection of a single ulnar artery, as stated by Brian Hutton in his report. (was #23)

170. January 27. On this date in 1931, Effie Baker arrived in Haifa. She was an Australian photographer who became a Bahá'í in 1922. Some of the pictures she took of the Bahá'í monuments in Iraq and Iran were included in Shoghi Effendi's translation of Nabíl-i-A'zam's "The Dawn-Breakers". (was #22)

171. January 27. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "We must supplicate Bahá'u'lláh to assist us to overcome the failings in our own characters, and also exert our own will power in mastering ourselves." (was #21)

172. January 28. On this date in 1901, May Ellis Bolles wrote Agnes Alexander "My precious Sister! Praise be to God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth." (was #20)

173. January 28. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children" and "A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage." (was #19)

174. January 28. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "Sterilization...is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason." (was #18)

175. January 28. On this date in 1956, the Bahá'í composer, conductor and arranger Tom Price was born. As director The Voices of Bahá, he has directed concerts in more than forty countries. He was also the director of the choir and symphony orchestra for the second World Congress in New York in 1992. (was #17)

176. January 28. On this date in 1924, Isabella D. Brittingham died. An early American Bahá'í, she converted after attending a course of "Truth Seeker" classes taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in New York City in 1898. She was posthumously named a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi. (was #16)

177. January 29. On this date in 1984, Edith May Miller Danielsen passed away. She had been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to the Cook Islands. (was #15)

178. January 29. On this date in 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. A Bahá'í, the description of her life in Esther Schor's "Bridge of Words" might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources. (was #14)

179. January 29. On this date in 2001, the UHJ sent an email providing an overview of the various components of the Continental Board of Counsellors and their functioning. Pictured here is 'Ali-Akbar Furutan with members of the UHJ, ITC, and Continental Counsellors in January 2001. (was #13)

180. January 30. On this date in in 1926, Martha Root secured the first of her eight meetings with Queen Marie of Romania Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to her as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim. (was #12)

181. January 30. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "Shadow of war's tragic aftermath is deepening. Initial stage of colossal task undertaken in European continent still in balance." (was #11)

182. January 30. On this date in 2006, the NSA of the U.S. wrote regarding its "decision to cease to distribute books and other items handled by Kalima´t Press...in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books...harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith." (was #10)

183. January 30. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís about "certain vital requirements" of the Seven Year Plan. (was #9)

184. January 30. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote eastern Bahá'ís "The responsibilities of the members of the Spiritual Assemblies that are engaged in teaching the Cause of God in Eastern lands have been clearly laid down in the holy Texts." (was #8)

185. January 31. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Auckland, New Zealand, and one in Battambang, Cambodia. (was #7)

186. January 31. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Except for what has been explained by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we have no way of knowing what various symbolic allusions in the Bible mean." (was #6)

187. January 31. On this date in 1983, the UHJ occupied its permanent seat. The Seat of UHJ was designed by architect Hossein Amanat, who also designed the ITC Building, the Centre for the Study of the Sacred Texts, and the Bahá'í House of Worship in Samoa. He is the brother of Abbas Amanat. (was #5)

188. January 31. On this date in 1971, the UHJ forwarded all NSAs cable from the NSA of the U.S. stating "entry by troops rapidly accelerating United States evidenced by enrollment 8000 new believers South Carolina course six weeks campaign raising number new believers entire country 13000 since Ridván. (was #4)

189. January 31. On this date in 1985, the UHJ wrote "The Lesser Peace itself will pass through stages: at the initial stage the governments will act entirely on their own without the conscious involvement of the Faith; later on, in God's good time, the Faith will have a direct influence on it..." (was #3)

190. January 31. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote all NSAs, Continental Counsellors, and the ITC about "advertisements...placed by the Covenant-breaker Joel Bray Marangella, seeking to revive his claim to be the "third Guardian of the Faith." This activity could provoke questions among the friends." (was #2)

191. January 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "If you find you need to visualize someone when you pray, think of the Master. Through Him you can address Bahá'u'lláh." (was #1)

January 1. On this date in 1958, the Hands of the Cause of God sent a cable calling for the suspension of religious festivities for a period of nine months from the day of Shoghi Effendi's death.

Original file: 0422.html (position #191)

January 1. On this date in 1958, the Hands of the Cause of God sent a cable calling for the suspension of religious festivities for a period of nine months from the day of Shoghi Effendi's death.

> *WITH HEARTS STILL TORN SORROW IRREPARABLE LOSS SACRED PRIMAL BRANCH WHOSE MIGHTY SPIRIT GUARDED INSPIRED COMFORTED MEMBERS WORLD BAHA'I COMMUNITY 36 YEARS WHOSE ALL-ENCOMPASSING VISION INFLEXIBLE DETERMINATION ESTABLISHED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER BY LIGHT WHOSE DIVINE GUIDANCE CAUSE GOD SPREAD UNINTERRUPTEDLY OVER ENTIRE PLANET WHOSE BLESSED SHADE MASTER STATES SHADOWETH ALL MANKIND HANDS HOLY LAND CALL UPON BEREAVED BELIEVERS SUITABLY EXPRESS LONGING GRIEF THEIR HEARTS BY REFRAINING EVERY MANNER RELIGIOUS FESTIVITY PERIOD NINE MONTHS FROM DAY HIS ASCENSION STOP SHARE MESSAGE ALL HANDS NATIONAL BODIES.*

Comments

January 1. On this date in 2004, the Bahá’í World News Service reported on a "a six-day gathering to inspire Baha'i youth...held at the Townshend International School" in Hluboká nad Vltavou in the Czech Republic.

Original file: 0421.html (position #190)

January 1. On this date in 2004, the Bahá’í World News Service reported on a "a six-day gathering to inspire Baha'i youth...held at the Townshend International School" in Hluboká nad Vltavou in the Czech Republic.

> *Inspiring young people to serve others*
>
> *1 January 2004*
>
> *HLUBOKA, Czech Republic — A six-day gathering to inspire Baha'i youth to make their contribution to the welfare of humanity attracted participants from more than 30 countries.*

The world's suffering was a "call to action," a keynote speaker told participants at the "Changing Times" seminar, which was held at the Townshend International School here from 26 December 2003 to 1 January 2004.

"Today we are witnessing the disintegration of international order," said Robert Henderson, the secretary-general of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States.

"Sovereign states are unable to stop the spread of terrorism and war, to stabilize the world economy or to alleviate the sufferings of millions," said Dr. Henderson, drawing on analysis by Shoghi Effendi and messages from the Universal House of Justice.

Baha'i youth, he said, should strive to become examples of the transforming power of Baha'u'llah.

They should "elevate the atmosphere" in which they live, face challenges with confidence and become the embodiment of excellence in their personal lives, academic training, professions, and spiritual qualities.

The atmosphere of the seminar was characterized by the joy and camaraderie of the some 220 participants. In addition to the many European Baha'is, attendees came from places as far away as Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

The program also featured a talk by Hamid Peseschkian, a psychiatrist who spoke on marriage preparation, and Lesley Taherzadeh, who addressed aspects of Baha'i history.

Ms. Taherzadeh spoke about the heroes and heroines of the Faith -- and she offered a moving tribute to her late husband, Adib Taherzadeh, a renowned Baha'i author who served on the Universal House of Justice.

Ardawan Lalui, the project director of the Townshend School, spoke about applying Baha'i principles to the workplace.

Topics by other speakers included the importance of ethics in business and the equality of men and women.

Workshops aimed at inspiring the youth to incorporate Baha'i principles into their lives included a focus on two current themes in Baha'i activities worldwide -- the

arts in Baha'i community life (led by Inder Manocha), and the importance of devotional meetings (led by Katrina Modabber).

Both of those workshop topics were illustrated in the program itself. Among the artistic performances were those by international prize-winning violinists Martha and Vahid Khadem-Missagh, who performed with their father, Bijan, at the official opening of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab in Haifa in May 2001.

Stand-up comedian Inder Manocha, who performed at the "Best of the Edinburgh Festival Showcase" and has appeared on BBC programs, provided an evening of comedy.

A devotional meeting, in which music and the arts provided an uplifting atmosphere, was one of the highlights of the seminar.

The seminar was dedicated to two much beloved Baha'is who passed away in 2003 -- the Hand of the Cause of God Ali-Akbar Furutan, and former member of the Universal House of Justice David Hofman.

The Changing Times seminar, organized by European Baha'i youth, was first held in 2002 and is scheduled to become an annual event.

Comments

January 1. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later included in "Bahá'í Administration," telling the Bahá'ís in the Soviet Union to "unreservedly" submit to "state orders" banning Bahá'í activities and assemblies.

Original file: 0420.html (position #189)

January 1. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later included in his seminal book "Bahá'í Administration," telling the Bahá'ís in the Soviet Union to "unreservedly" submit to "state orders... suspending all meetings, commemoration gatherings and festivals, suppressing the committees of all Bahá'í local and national Spiritual Assemblies, prohibiting the raising of funds and the transmission of financial contributions to any center within or without Soviet jurisdiction, requiring the right of full and frequent inspection of the deliberations, decisions, plans and action of the Bahá'í Assemblies, dissolving young men's clubs and children's organizations, imposing a strict censorship on all correspondence to and from Bahá'í Assemblies, directing a minute investigation of Assemblies' papers and documents, suspending all Bahá'í periodicals, bulletins and magazines, and requiring the deportation of leading personalities in the Cause whether as public teachers and speakers or officers of Bahá'í Assemblies..."

Bahá'i writings clearly forbid disobedience to one's government unless it involves the renunciation of faith. For example, Soviet policies targeted Bahá'í institutions and administrative structures. On January 1, 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later included in his seminal book *Bahá'í Administration* with sections titled "Persecutions in Russia" and "Guiding Principle of Conduct". Shoghi Effendi stated...

> *the varied and numerous Bahá'í institutions established in the past by heroic pioneers of the Faith have been brought into direct and sudden contact with the internal convulsions necessitated by the establishment and maintenance of an order so fundamentally at variance with Russia's previous regime. The avowed purpose and action of the responsible heads of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics who, within their recognized and legitimate rights, have emphatically proclaimed and vigorously pursued their policy of uncompromising opposition to all forms of organized religious propaganda, have by their very nature created for those whose primary obligation is to labor unremittingly for the spread of the Bahá'í Faith a state of affairs that is highly unfortunate and perplexing...*
>
> *our Bahá'í brethren in those provinces have had to endure the rigid application of the principles already enunciated by the state authorities and universally enforced with regard to all other religious communities under their sway. Faithful to their policy of expropriating in the interests of the State all edifices and monuments of a religious character, they have a few months ago approached the Bahá'í representatives in Turkistan, and after protracted negotiations with them, decided to claim and enforce their right of ownership and control of that most cherished and universally prized Bahá'í possession, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Ishqábád...*
>
> *To these measures which the State, in the free exercise of its legitimate rights, has chosen to enforce, and with which the Bahá'ís, as befits their position as loyal and law-abiding citizens, have complied, others have followed which though of a different character are none the less grievously affecting our beloved Cause. In Baku, the seat of the Soviet Republic of Caucasus, as well as in Ganjih and other neighboring towns, state orders, orally and in writing, have been officially communicated to the Bahá'í Assemblies and individual believers, suspending all meetings, commemoration gatherings and festivals, suppressing the committees of all Bahá'í local and national Spiritual Assemblies, prohibiting the raising of funds and the transmission of financial contributions to any center within or without Soviet jurisdiction, requiring the right of full and frequent inspection of the*

> *deliberations, decisions, plans and action of the Bahá'í Assemblies, dissolving young men's clubs and children's organizations, imposing a strict censorship on all correspondence to and from Bahá'í Assemblies, directing a minute investigation of Assemblies' papers and documents, suspending all Bahá'í periodicals, bulletins and magazines, and requiring the deportation of leading personalities in the Cause whether as public teachers and speakers or officers of Bahá'í Assemblies...*
>
> *To all these the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have with feelings of burning agony and heroic fortitude unanimously and unreservedly submitted, ever mindful of the guiding principles of Bahá'í conduct that in connection with their administrative activities, no matter how grievously interference with them might affect the course of the extension of the Movement, and the suspension of which does not constitute in itself a departure from the principle of loyalty to their Faith, the considered judgment and authoritative decrees issued by their responsible rulers must, if they be faithful to Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's express injunctions, be thoroughly respected and loyally obeyed...*
>
> *Clinging with immovable resolution to the inviolable verities of their cherished Faith, our sorely-tried brethren in Caucasus and Turkistan have none the less, as befits law-abiding Bahá'í citizens resolved, after having exhausted every legitimate means for the alleviation of the restrictions imposed upon them, to definitely uphold and conscientiously carry out the considered judgment of their recognized government.*

Comments

January 1. On this date in 1971, Hand of the Cause of God Agnes Baldwin Alexander died.

January 1. On this date in 1971, Hand of the Cause of God Agnes Baldwin Alexander died.

Agnes Baldwin Alexander was born in Honolulu on July 21, 1875, to descendants of Christian missionary families, the Baldwins and the Alexanders, who were among the families of whom James A. Michener said, "They came to the islands to do good, and they did right well."

She became a Bahá'í in 1900 while visiting Italy.

After returning in 1901, she remained in Hawaii for 12 years, and of her experiences there wrote *Personal Recollections of a Bahai Life in the Hawaiian Islands*. Upon 'Abdu'l-Baha's request, Alexander moved to Japan in 1914. In 1921 she became the first to introduce the religion to Korea. Except for extended vacations in Hawaii, Alexander spent over thirty years in Japan.

Also at the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used that new international language to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences. At Shoghi Effendi's request, Alexander wrote two histories: *Forty Years of the Bahá'í Cause in Hawaii: 1902-1942* and *History of the Bahá'í Faith in Japan: 1914-1938*. Both of these volumes were published posthumously. In 1957, Shoghi Effendi appointed her a Hand of the Cause of God. In 1964, Alexander represented the Universal House of Justice, at the election of Hawaii's first National Spiritual Assembly, which is distinct from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. After suffering a broken hip in 1965, and spending two years in a Tokyo hospital, Alexander returned home to Honolulu in 1967.

On January 1, 1971, Alexander died. She was buried behind Kawaiahao Church with her

missionary forebears.

Comments

January 1. On this date in 1912, Alí-Muhammad Varqá, the longest surviving Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Tehran. From 1955 until his death he was also the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu’lláh, a position he inherited after the death of his father Valíyu'lláh, who had served as Trustee from 1938 to 1955

Original file: 0418.html (position #187)

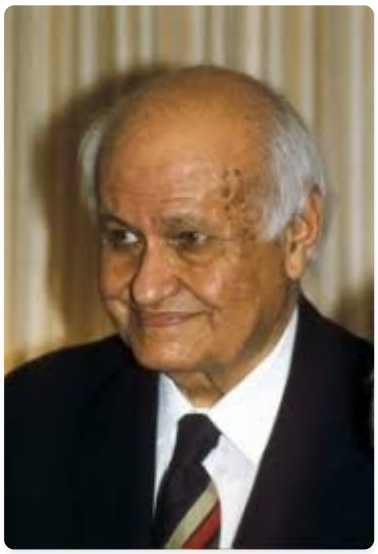
January 1. On this date in 1912, ‘Alí-Muhammad Varqá was born in Tehran. From 1955 until his death he was also the Trustee of Ḥuqúqu’lláh, a position he inherited after the death of his father Valíyu'lláh, who had served as Trustee from 1938 to 1955.

‘Alí-Muḥammad Varqá was born January 1, 1912 in Tehran, Iran, to a distinguished Iranian Bahá’í Family. His grandfather, from whom he received his name was an Apostle of Bahá’u’lláh and his father Valíyu'lláh Varqá, was also the trustee of the Ḥuqúqu’lláh and a Hand of the Cause.

‘Alí-Muḥammad Varqá obtained a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris in 1950, taught in Iran at the universities of Tabriz and Tehran, and served the Bahá’í community there in various administrative capacities. In 1979 he moved to Canada, and later established his residence in Haifa to serve at the Bahá’í World Centre.

He traveled to many countries as a representative first of Shoghi Effendi, then of the Universal House of Justice. In that capacity, Dr. Varqá attended the first National Conventions of Belgium, Luxembourg, the Congo, Mauritania, Central Africa Republic, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Czechoslovakia, Greenland, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

Upon his death, ‘Alí-Muḥammad Varqá was survived by three daughters and six siblings. His funeral took place on the morning of September 24, with burial in the Bahá’í cemetery in Haifa.



Comments

Baha'i History - January 1, 1962 , Amelia Collins, a Hand of the Cause of God, died in Haifa, Israel. She donated vast sums of her husband's mining fortunes to several projects at the Bahá'í World Centre, and the Collins Gate at Bahji is named after her.

Original file: 0417.html (position #186)

January 1. On this date in 1962, Amelia Collins, later named a Hand of the Cause of God, died in Haifa, Israel.

She donated vast sums of her husband's mining fortunes to several projects at the Bahá'í World Centre, and the Collins Gate at Bahji is named after her.

Amelia Engelder Collins was born June 7, 1873 to Catherine Groff and Conrad Engelder, a German emigrant and Lutheran clergyman. She was the seventh child of a family of nine sons and five daughters.

She married Thomas H. Collins, a mining engineer, and lived in Calumet, Michigan and later Bisbee, Arizona. Collins met great success in Bisbee by developing the porphyry copper mining operations that eventually become the Phelps-Dodge Mining Company.

They moved to California during the 1920s where Millie, as she was affectionately known, became a Baha'i and made her first pilgrimage to Haifa in early 1923. Thomas Collins accompanied her and was shown great kindness by Shoghi Effendi.

During a cruise to Iceland in 1924, Millie met Holmfridur Arnadottir, the first Icelandic Bahá'í, and became good friends. Later, in 1939, she supported the publication of the first translation of Bahá'í literature in Icelandic: Esslemont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. In 1924, Millie was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada. She was a member of this body until 1933. Then again in 1938, she was re-elected and served until Shoghi Effendi called her to service at the Bahá'i World Center. In addition, she served as a member of the National Teaching, Assembly Development, and Inter-America Committees. She visited with and assisted most of the Assemblies within the United States and Canada with their consolidation work and those of South and Central America in teaching work during the First and Second Seven Year Plans, 1937-1953.

Thomas Collins, although having never having converted to the Bahá'i Faith, supported Millie's Bahá'i activities. These included the financial contributions that maintained the solvency of the Geyserville School. In 1937, he unexpectedly died from a heart attack. Shoghi Effendi asked the Bahá'is at the Geyserville summer school to hold a befitting memorial service.

After arranging her substantial estate in order, one that would eventually establish the institutions of the Bahá'i World Center, Millie later that same year made her second pilgrimage to Haifa where she developed a friendship with Shoghi Effendi's wife, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. In a letter to her, shortly after this pilgrimage, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The days you spent under the shadow of the Holy Shrines will long be remembered with joy and gratitude. I have during these days increasingly appreciated and admired the profound sense of devotion, the passionate fervor, the intense love and attachment that animates you in the service of the Holy Cause. For such noble qualities I feel thankful, and I am certain that the fruits they will yield will be equally outstanding and memorable. Rest assured and be happy."

Shoghi Effendi, in 1937, sent a sacred gift to the American Bahá'i Community through Millie. This was the lock of Baha'u'llah's hair that had been preserved by the Greatest Holy Leaf, to be placed beneath the dome of the American Bahá'i Temple. She presented the gift during the 1938 National Bahá'i Convention mounted in a silver frame, the first of many sacred gifts from Shoghi Effendi to become part of the National Bahá'i Archives.

In 1945, Millie was invited by Holmfridur Arnadottir to come to Iceland. In response,

Shoghi Effendi replied through his secretary: "As he cabled you, he feels your presence in America more important than Iceland at this time... The Small Assemblies in America are badly in need of Bahá'i' education..." He went on to say that Millie was one of those needed for this task and to travel to Iceland could jeopardize her health. Millie was the first to initiate the teaching of the American Indians in accordance to 'Abdú'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan. In 1948, the first Indian Bahá'i Assembly on the American continent was formed on the Omaha Indian Reservation at Macy, Nebraska.

Millie's travels for the Faith at the request of Shoghi Effendi were extensive. These included the arrangements, in 1942, for the design and erection of the memorial to May Maxwell, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's mother in Buenos Aires. She even located a block of Carrara marble with the right characteristics for the project. Travel arrangements were nearly impossible because of the wartime conditions. In 1946 and 1949, Millie made additional trips to Latin America to attend conferences and teaching work.

In 1947, Shoghi Effendi proclaimed that Millie Collins has been made his ninth Hand of the Cause of God. Millie Collins traveled several times to Europe after the close of World War II. In 1951, she traveled at the request of Shoghi Effendi to Turkey and Egypt. While in Cairo, despite becoming so ill that she could hardly stand, she gave an address to a large public meeting at the Hazíratu'l-Quds.

Although Millie lived very simply, she made generous contributions to the Faith. In 1944, she sent Shoghi Effendi a generous contribution that covered most of the cost of constructing the superstructure for the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel. Other contributions include: purchase of property on Mount Carmel (1926); development and extension of the Geyserville School properties in northern California (1936); at Davison, Michigan, the first publication of Bahá'i literature in Amharic (1934); first contribution to the Bahíyyih Khánum Fund toward the erection of the Mother Temple of America (1939): Contribution to the Persian Temple Fund (1939); defrayed cost of publication of four volumes of The Bahá'i World; Additional contributions to the Mother Temple Works, gifts of property near the Temple and to the Temple Dependency Fund, and various teaching projects, donations toward the purchase of nineteen supplementary Temple sites in Latin-America, Europe and Asia; contributions to aid embellishment of the area surrounding the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji and erection and furnishing of the International Archives building on Mount Carmel; the donation of the entire sum for the purchase of the Temple site on Mount Carmel (1953).

In 1953, Shoghi Effendi acknowledged in his message to the twelve Annual Conventions, Millie's "munificent donation" toward the purchase of many Hazíratu'l-Quds and

endowments on five continents and in his last Convention message in 1957 for the donations for the building of the Mother Temples in Europe, Australia and Africa. Shoghi Effendi named the main gate to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji in her honor.

Shoghi Effendi appointed Millie Collins in January 1951 as the vice -president of the International Bahá'i Council, and she went to live in Haifa. This work continued for the rest of her life. In 1953, as part of the Ten Year World Crusade, she and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum represented Shoghi Effendi at the All-American Conference in Chicago.

Shoghi Effendi died on November 4, 1957. Millie was planning to meet him in Haifa, and upon her arrival there, heard the news of his unexpected death in London where he was shopping for furniture and ornaments for the International Archives Building. Millie immediately departed for London to join Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum in her time of need. Millie gave Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum emotional support during the proceeding four years. In October 1961, Millie fell and fractured her arm, requiring hospitalization. Despite her frailness, she returned to Haifa to assist the Hands of the Cause in regard to the first election of the Universal House of Justice. She had to be carried in a wheelchair to the meetings being held at Bahji, and was able to attend all but one.

On the afternoon of January 1, 1962, at the age of 91, Millie Collins died while being held in the arms of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. Her body is buried in the Bahá'i cemetery at the foot of Mt. Carmel.

Comments

January 1. On this date in 2003, the Bahá'í World News Service reported a marathon in Bangalore, India, "which aimed to raise awareness about human rights abuses in Iran."

January 1. On this date in 2003, the Bahá'í World News Service reported a marathon in Bangalore, India, "which aimed to raise awareness about human rights abuses in Iran."

> *Marathon run highlights Iran's human rights abuses*
>
> *1 January 2013*
>
> *BANGALORE, India — More than 500 people, ranging in age from primary school children to senior citizens, took to the streets here to support a marathon run which aimed to raise awareness about human rights abuses in Iran.*
>
> *The early morning run, which followed a circuit around the city's Ulsoor lake, was organised by the Classic Road Runners Athletic Club of Bangalore. It was the debut public event for the club which decided to take the opportunity to highlight the issue of human rights after conversations with local Baha'is.*
>
> *Spectators cheered on the runners while waving banners calling for the release of prisoners of conscience in Iran.*

> *"Though the severe persecution of the Baha'is in Iran was the idea that gave the impetus to this run," said Dr. A.J. Ansari, the club's Vice-President, "this persecution is a symptom of a global problem where certain sections of our worldwide family suffer discrimination as well as active violation of basic rights for reasons that would be disconcerting to any fair minded observer."*
>
> *The event was held on Sunday 9 December to mark United Nations Human Rights Day the following day.*

Comments

January 2. On this date in 1923, over one year after 'Abdu’l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi wrote his first letter to Canadian Bahá'ís.

Original file: 0415.html (position #184)

January 2. On this date in 1923, over one year after 'Abdu’l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi wrote his first letter to Canadian Bahá'ís.

> *THE GUARDIAN'S FIRST LETTER TO CANADA. 1923*
>
> *The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout Canada.*
>
> *Care of the members of the Spiritual Assembly in Montreal*
>
> *Dear Friends,*
>
> *It is a great pleasure and privilege to me to enter into direct, and I trust, permanent correspondence with those faithful friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who though few in number and scattered over that vast and flourishing country, will I trust act as a powerful leaven to the mass of that spiritually-minded people.*
>
> *Though its people be firmly entrenched in their religious sectarianism and strongly attached to their religious doctrines and traditions, yet who can doubt that with courage and persistence, kindliness and wisdom, the all-conquering words of Bahá'u'lláh can fail to break down all these barriers of prejudice and religious exclusiveness and conquer this longstanding stronghold of sectarian belief!*
>
> *Surely the efficacy of the universal Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh as applied to the cherished and time-honoured religious traditions of the East, has been sufficiently*

demonstrated to justify at present our confident hopes for the future and speedy re-awakening of that land.

May the small company of the steadfast followers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada be filled with the outpourings of the Divine Grace that are being showered so mightily in these days upon the friends of God the world over, and may they arise with undiminished fervour to carry out to their fullest measure the last wishes and instructions of our departed Master for that great and flourishing Dominion!

With all good wishes,

Your brother and co-worker,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

January 2, 1923.

Comments

Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1851, the Bábi insurrection in Zanjan came to an end with the insurgents' imprisonment.

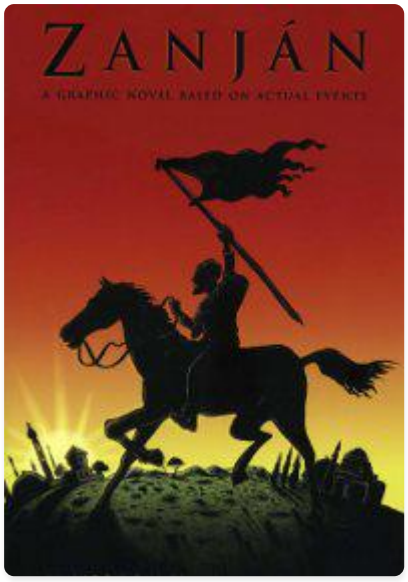
Original file: 0414.html (position #183)

January 2. On this date in 1851, the Bábi insurrection in Zanjan came to an end with the insurgents' imprisonment.

On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated.

Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings. Under instructions from the Báb, on July 21, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis. They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at the battle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849.

The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.



Comments

Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1986, the UHJ wrote "the Conference attained such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy...Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis."

Original file: 0413.html (position #182)

January 2. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the Conference attained such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy...Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis."

> *January 2, 1986*

The Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly-loved Friends,

The eager expectation with which we welcomed to the World Centre, on 27 December, sixty-four Counselors from the five continents to discuss, with the International Teaching Centre, the challenges and opportunities facing the Bahá'í world community, has, at the conclusion of their historic conference, been transmuted into feelings of deepest joy, gratitude and love.

Graced by the presence of the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, Alí-Muhammad Varqá and Collis Featherstone, the Conference was organized and managed with admirable foresight and efficiency by the International Teaching Centre, whose individual members watched over and served untiringly the needs of the participants and the progress of the Conference itself.

Convened in the concourse of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice as the Counselors of the Bahá'í world entered upon their new five-year term of office, within months of the termination of the Seven Year Plan and the opening of the new Six Year Plan, its aura heightened by the spiritual potencies of the Holy Shrines and the euphoric sense of victory and blessing now pervading the entire Bahá'í world, ***the Conference attained such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy.***

The organic growth of the Cause of God, indicated by recent significant developments in its life, becomes markedly apparent in the light of the main objectives and expectations of the Six Year Plan: a vast expansion of the numerical and financial resources of the Cause; enlargement of its status in the world; a world-wide increase in the production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; a firmer and world-wide demonstration of the Bahá'í way of life requiring special consideration of the Bahá'í education of children and youth, the strengthening of Bahá'í family life and attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual life; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities and a dynamic consolidation of the unity of the two arms of the Administrative Order; an extension of the involvement of the Bahá'í world community in the needs of the world around it; and the pursuit of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities. These

are some of the features of the Six Year Plan which will open on 21 April 1986 and terminate on 20 April 1992.

Ridván 1992 will mark the inception of a Holy Year, during which the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh will be observed by commemorations around the world and the inauguration of His Covenant will be celebrated, in the City of the Covenant, by the holding of the second Bahá'í World Congress.

The beloved Counsellors, strengthened and enriched by their experience in the Holy Land, will, as early as possible, consult with all National Spiritual Assemblies on measures to conclude triumphantly the current Plan, and on preparations to launch the Six Year Plan. In anticipation of those consultations, National Spiritual Assemblies will receive the full announcement of the aims and characteristics of that Plan, so that together with the Counsellors they may formulate the national plans which will, for each community, establish its pursuit of the overall objectives.

This new process, whereby the national goals of the next Planare to be largely formulated by National Spiritual Assemblies and Boards of Counsellors, signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; we have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.

Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis. *The unprecedented triumphs, generated by the adamantine steadfastness of the Iranian friends, will inevitably provoke opposition to test and increase our strength. Let every Bahá'í in the world be assured that whatever may befall this growing Faith of God is but incontrovertible evidence of the loving care with which the King of Glory and His martyred Herald, through the incomparable Centre of His Covenant and our beloved Guardian, are preparing His humble followers for ultimate and magnificent triumph. Our loving prayers are with you all.*

The Universal House of Justice

Comments

January 2. On this date in 1991, the Universal House of Justice responded to an individual who proposed "for a number of changes to Bahá'í electoral, judicial and reviewing procedures."

Original file: 0412.html (position #181)

January 2. On this date in 1991, the Universal House of Justice responded to an individual who proposed (also here) "for a number of changes to Bahá'í electoral, judicial and reviewing procedures."

Comments

January 2. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote "For the last two years there has been a decline in the amount of contributions to the international funds of the Faith, and we note that many national funds also are facing the danger of deficits..Most urgently, may every believer give sacrificially..

Original file: 0411.html (position #180)

January 2. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice wrote "To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every Land" that "For the last two years there has been a decline in the amount of contributions to the international funds of the Faith, and we note that many national funds also are facing the danger of deficits...Most urgently, may every believer give sacrificially of his substance, each in accordance with his means, to the funds of the Cause, local, national, continental and international, so that the material resources — the life-blood of all activities — will be adequate to the tremendous work that we have to

perform in the months and years immediately ahead."

> *January 2, 1984*
>
> *To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in every Land*
>
> *Dearly-loved Friends,*
>
> *The gathering of the representatives of the Bahá'í world at the International Convention last Ridván was held in an atmosphere charged with awareness of the sacrifices being made by our fellow believers in Iran and with eager anticipation of the new prospects opening before the Cause as a result of changing conditions in the world, the widespread publicity that the Faith has received in all continents, and the growing maturity of its administrative institutions.*
>
> *During the succeeding eight months we have been developing the agencies and formulating the plans to enable the Faith to seize the unprecedented opportunities now before it, but we are confronted with a shortage of funds which, if not remedied, could frustrate these plans.* ***For the last two years there has been a decline in the amount of contributions to the international funds of the Faith, and we note that many national funds also are facing the danger of deficits.***
>
> *Beyond carrying on the general work of the Cause there are four areas where immediate action is required.*
>
> *The* ***first*** *is the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs in India and Samoa. Any delay in this work can but make it more expensive and also seriously injure the reputation of the Faith in these two vital areas.*
>
> *The* ***second*** *is the development of the World Centre, the focal point of the entire Administrative Order of the Faith where, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, "the dust of its Founders reposes, where the processes disclosing its purposes, energizing its life and shaping its destiny all originate."*
>
> *The* ***third*** *is in the prosecution of programs of social and economic development. Bahá'í communities in many lands have attained a size and complexity that both require and make possible the implementation of a range of activities for their social and economic development which will not only be of immense value for the*

consolidation of these communities and the the development of their Bahá'í life, but will also benefit the wider communities within which they are embedded and will demonstrate the beneficial effects of the Bahá'í Message to the critical gaze of the world. Funds for the initiation and carrying out of these projects will be dispensed very gradually and with great care in order not to undermine the natural growth and sense of responsibility of these communities, but the field is so vast, the opportunities so far-reaching, that the need will stretch the resources of the Cause to the utmost.

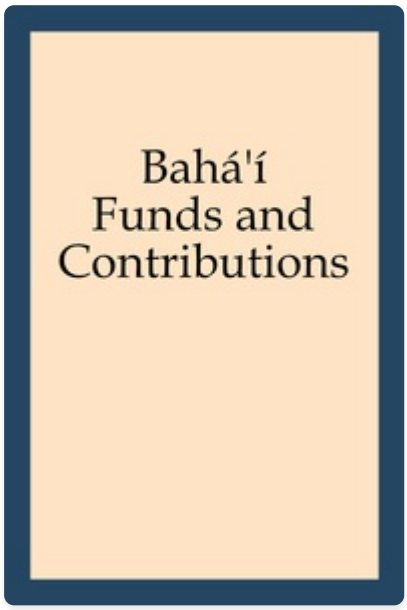
*The **fourth** area is the development and coordination of world-wide efforts to present to a far more extensive audience than ever before the divine remedy for the problems besetting society and its individual members, to establish the universality of the Faith and the implications of its teachings in the eyes of statesmen, and to ensure that the leaders of thought become thoroughly aware of the Bahá'í Revelation and the profundity of its message.*

The work on the Temples is already well advanced and must not be stopped; the development of the agencies of the World Centre, located in one of the principle trouble-spots of the world, cannot be indefinitely held back; the time for the expansion of social and economic development as an aspect of the work of the Cause has arrived and it cannot be neglected without grave consequences to the life of Bahá'í communities; the unprecedented opportunity for proclamation of the Faith has been given to us as a direct result of the persecutions inflicted on the believers in the Cradle of the Faith. If we are to be worthy of the sacrifices of these valiant friends, and if we are not to betray the trust that Bahá'u'lláh has placed upon us for the redemption of mankind in this hour of its acute need, we must not fail to seize the opportunities now before us.

This fourfold challenge faces us at the very time when the world is in the midst of an economic crisis and is overshadowed with threats of war and other disasters. These conditions, far from daunting the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, can only drive home to us the urgency for our response.

*We therefore call upon every true-hearted Bahá'í to consecrate his life anew to the service of God and the betterment of the lot of mankind, so that manpower will not be lacking in the fields of pioneering, teaching and administrative service. **Most urgently, may every believer give sacrificially of his substance, each in accordance with his means, to the funds of the Cause, local, national, continental and international, so that the material resources***

> ***— the life-blood of all activities — will be adequate to the tremendous work that we have to perform in the months and years immediately ahead.*** *It requires a concentration of effort, a unity of purpose and a degree of self-sacrifice to match the heroic exertions of the victors of past plans in the progress of the Cause.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice*

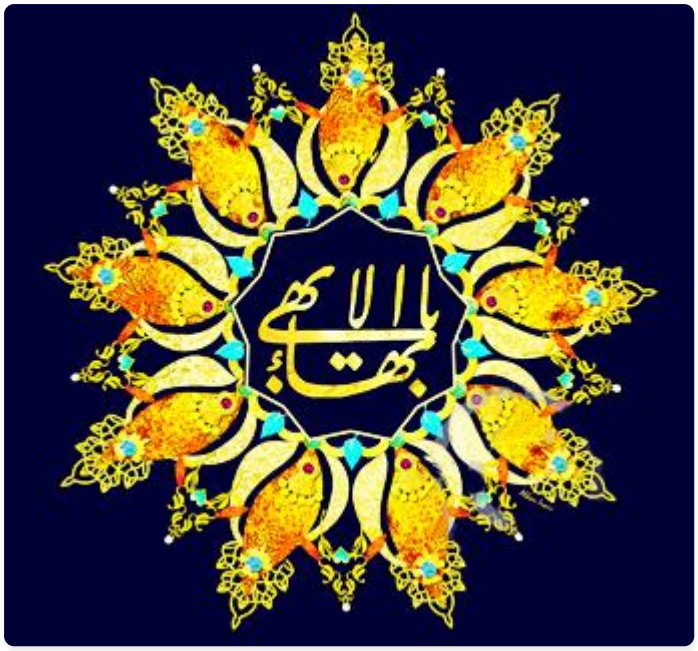


Comments

January 2. On this date in 2002, an individual wrote the UHJ asking "for assistance in reconciling various statements from the Writings that seem to contradict each other...and draws attention to two or more apparently contradictory quotations on six different subjects."

Original file: 0410.html (position #179)

January 2. On this date in 2002, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking "for assistance in reconciling various statements from the Writings that seem to contradict each other. He states his awareness that 'many times the reconciliation of seeming contradictions produces a new spark of truth' and draws attention to two or more apparently contradictory quotations on six different subjects. He offers his thoughts about how each of the apparent contradictions might be resolved, and asks for further clarification."



Comments

Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1902, Julius Edwards, later named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Northern Territories Protectorate, was born in Jamaica.

Original file: 0409.html (position #178)

January 2. On this date in 1902, Julius Edwards, later named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Northern Territories Protectorate, was born in Jamaica.

Julius was born in Cannon Hall District in St. Mary's, Jamaica, on January 2, 1902. He was active in the field of civil rights prior to becoming a Bahá’í, co-founding the Jamaica Economic-Socio Society, serving as chairman of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, acting as adviser to two Prime Ministers of Jamaica, and serving as Marcus Garveys personal secretary. He became a Bahá’í after being introduced to the Faith by William Mitchell, and began actively teaching the Faith in Jamaica, especially in Spanishtown, and also abroad in neighboring El Salvador. In his career, he worked as a tailor.

In 1953, at the opening of the Ten Year Crusade, Julius answered Shoghi Effendi's call for pioneers to areas that had not yet been opened to the Faith departing Kingstown on August 29, 1953, and arriving in the Northern Territories Protectorate, within the British colony of the Gold Coast, on September 29, 1953. He lived in Tamale where he was able to convert three locals to the Faith, and also taught in Kumasi, but he was unable to secure permission to remain in the country for an extended time and pioneered to Liberia after only three

months.

In 1956 he was honored with a certificate of decoration signed by the President of Liberia, William Tubman, appointing him Knight Official of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption, and Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga noted that the President had a favorable opinion of the Faith through his introduction by Edwards. In 1960 he married Vera Keens-Douglas of Grenada who he had introduced to the Faith in Monrovia, and she assisted him in teaching in Liberia.

In December 1979 the Edwards moved from Liberia for Grenada, arriving in February 1980, and they served the Grenada Bahá'í community. Vera died on November 19, 1981, and Julius died four years later, on March 17, 1985. The Universal House of Justice conveyed the following message after his death:

> *GRIEVED PASSING JULIUS A. G. EDWARDS EARLY BELIEVER JAMAICA KNIGHT BAHAULLAH NORTHERN TERRITORIES PROTECTORATE AND PIONEER TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS LIBERIA. HIS LONG RECORD SERVICES AFRICA CARIBBEAN HAVE ENRICHED ANNALS CAUSE. KINDLY CONVEY FAMILY CONDOLENCES ASSURANCE PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.*

Comments

Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "...you can see that it is impossible for the Jews to be forgotten in a Bahá'í context. The blessings which will be conferred upon them for what has occurred in the Holy Land in this new dispensation will become increasingly evident."

Original file: 0408.html (position #177)

January 2. On this date in 1992, the Universal House of Justice wrote "...you can see that it is impossible for the Jews to be forgotten in a Bahá'í context. The blessings which will be conferred upon them for what has occurred in the Holy Land in this new dispensation will become increasingly evident."

> *"However, beyond this lies the supreme reality that the Manifestation of God for*

> *our age spent the latter part: of His life in that area of the world in which the Jews have today established a State. The Centre of our Faith, its Shrines and administrative headquarters are established there. From these two distinct points of view, you can see that it is impossible for the Jews to be forgotten in a Bahá'í context. The blessings which will be conferred upon them for what has occurred in the Holy Land in this new dispensation will become increasingly evident." (2 January 1992, to an individual believer)*

Comments

Baha'i History - January 2. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to "Bahá’ís of the World" announcing the opening of the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá’í Era.

Original file: 0407.html (position #176)

January 2. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to "Bahá’ís of the World" announcing the opening of the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá’í Era.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *2 January 1986*
>
> *The Bahá’ís of the World*
>
> *Dearly loved Friends,*
>
> *The eager expectation with which we welcomed to the World Center, on 27 December, sixty-four Counselors from the five continents to discuss, with the International Teaching Centre, the challenges and opportunities facing the Bahá’í*

world community, has, at the conclusion of their historic conference, been transmuted into feelings of deepest joy, gratitude and love.

Graced by the presence of the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery, 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá *and* Collis Featherstone, *the Conference was organized and managed with admirable foresight and efficiency by the International Teaching Centre, whose individual members watched over and served untiringly the needs of the participants and the progress of the Conference itself.*

Convened in the concourse of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice as the Counselors of the Bahá'í world entered upon their new five-year term of office, within months of the termination of the Seven Year Plan *and the opening of the new* Six Year Plan, *its aura heightened by the spiritual potencies of the Holy Shrines and the euphoric sense of victory and blessing now pervading the entire Bahá'í world, the Conference attained such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy.*

The organic growth of the Cause of God, indicated by recent significant developments in its life, becomes markedly apparent in the light of the main objectives and expectations of the Six Year Plan: a vast expansion of the numerical and financial resources of the Cause; enlargement of its status in the world; a worldwide increase in the production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; a firmer and worldwide demonstration of the Bahá'í way of life requiring special consideration of the Bahá'í education of children and youth, the strengthening of Bahá'í family life and attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual life; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities and a dynamic consolidation of the unity of the two arms of the Administrative Order; an extension of the involvement of the Bahá'í world community in the needs of the world around it; and the pursuit of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities. These are some of the features of the Six Year Plan which will open on 21 April 1986 and terminate on 20 April 1992.

Riḍván 1992 will mark the inception of a Holy Year, during which the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh *will be observed by commemorations around the world and the inauguration of His Covenant will be celebrated, in the* City of the Covenant, *by the holding of the* second Bahá'í World Congress.

The beloved Counselors, strengthened and enriched by their experience in the Holy Land, will, as early as possible, consult with all National Spiritual Assemblies on measures to conclude triumphantly the current Plan, and on preparations to launch the Six Year Plan. In anticipation of those consultations, National Spiritual Assemblies will receive the full announcement of the aims and characteristics of that Plan, so that together with the Counselors they may formulate the national plans which will, for each community, establish its pursuit of the overall objectives.

This new process, whereby the national goals of the next Plan are to be largely formulated by National Spiritual Assemblies and Boards of Counselors, signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian#Background) anticipated a succession of epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.

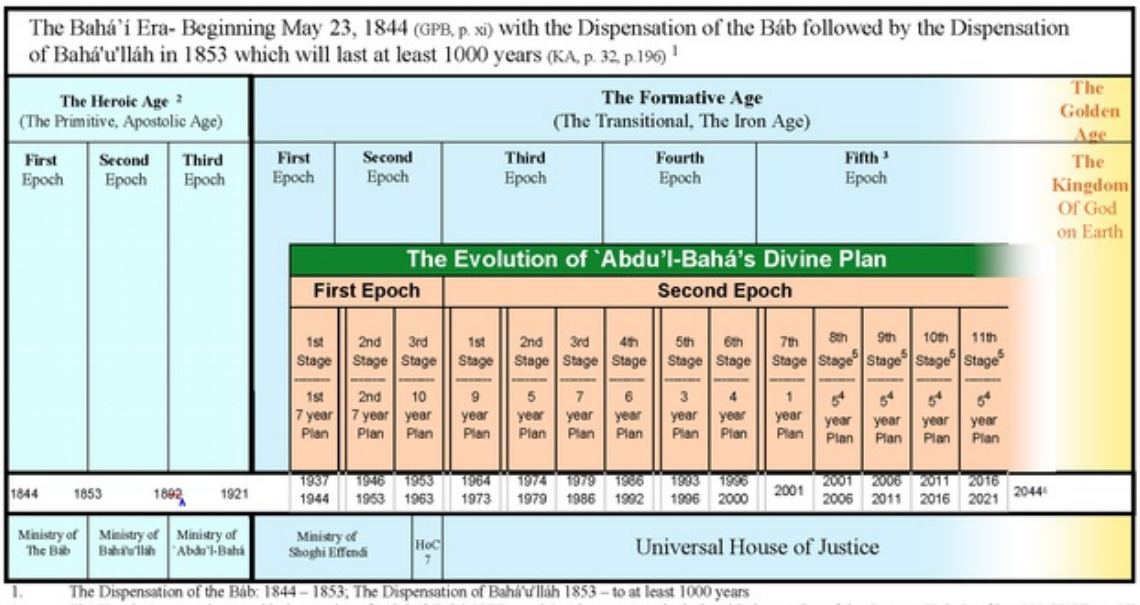
Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis. The unprecedented triumphs, generated by the adamantine steadfastness of the Iranian friends, will inevitably provoke opposition to test and increase our strength. Let every Bahá'í in the world be assured that whatever may befall this growing Faith of God is but incontrovertible evidence of the loving care with which the King of Glory and His martyred Herald, through the incomparable Center of His Covenant and our beloved Guardian, are preparing His humble followers for ultimate and magnificent triumph. Our loving prayers are with you all.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 3. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote an individual "now having to face and resolve problems" noting "It is true that Bahá'u'lláh lays on every Bahá'í the duty to teach His Faith. At the same time, however, we are forbidden to proselytize, so it is important for all believers to ..."

Original file: 0406.html (position #175)

January 3. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote an individual "now having to face and resolve problems that many believers overcome before they declare their faith" noting "It is true that Bahá'u'lláh lays on every Bahá'í the duty to teach His Faith. At the same time, however, we are forbidden to proselytize, so it is important for all believers to understand the difference between teaching and proselytizing."

Proselytizing, Development, and the Covenant by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice published in Messages from the Universal House of Justice: 1963-1986, The Third Epoch of the Formative Age, pages 513-519 Wilmette, IL: US Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1996 first written or published 1982-01-03 page 513 3 January 1982 To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

[308.1] The Universal House of Justice has received your letter and has asked us to assure you that you should feel no diffidence in raising the sort of questions that you have expressed. It seems clear from your letter that you have been greatly attracted to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and have accepted His Faith before, as you say, becoming "fully committed," and are, therefore, now having to face and resolve problems that many believers overcome before they declare their faith. The House of justice urges you not to let it worry you. All through life Bahá'ís are faced with tests of many kinds, and problems and doubts, but it is through facing and overcoming them that we grow spiritually.

[308.2] On the particular issues that you raise, the House of Justice has instructed us to send you the following comments.

Teaching vs. Proselytizing

[308.3] It is true that Bahá'u'lláh lays on every Bahá'í the duty to teach His Faith. At the same time, however, we are forbidden to proselytize, so it is important for all believers to understand the difference between teaching and proselytizing. It is a significant difference and, in some countries where teaching a religion is permitted, but proselytizing is forbidden, the distinction is made in the law of the land. Proselytizing implies bringing undue pressure to bear upon someone to change his Faith. It is also usually understood to imply the making of threats or the offering of material benefits as an inducement to conversion. In some countries mission schools or hospitals, for all the good they do, are regarded with suspicion and even aversion by the local authorities because they are considered to be material inducements to conversion and hence instruments of proselytization.

[308.4] Bahá'u'lláh, in The Hidden Words, says, "O Son of Dust! The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearer, who proffereth not his cup till he findeth a seeker, and the lover who crieth not out from the depths of his heart until he gazeth upon the beauty of his beloved .... ", and on page 55 of The Advent of Divine Justice, a letter which is primarily directed towards exhorting the friends to fulfill their responsibilities in teaching the Faith, Shoghi Effendi writes: "Care, however, should, at all times, be exercised, lest in their eagerness to further the international interests of the Faith they frustrate their purpose, and turn away, through any act that might be misconstrued as an attempt to proselytize and bring undue

pressure upon them, those whom they wish to win over to their Cause." Some Bahá'ís sometimes overstep the proper bounds, but this does not alter the clear principle.

[308.5] The responsibility of the Bahá'ís to teach the Faith is very great. The contraction of the world and the onward rush of events require us to seize every chance open to us to touch the hearts and minds of our fellowmen. The Message of Bahá'u'lláh is God's guidance for mankind to overcome the difficulties of this age of transition and move forward into the next stage of its evolution, and human beings have the right to hear it. Those who accept it incur the duty of passing it on to their fellowman. The slowness of the response of the world has caused and is causing great suffering; hence the historical pressure upon Bahá'ís to exert every effort to teach the Faith for the sake of their fellowmen. They should teach with enthusiasm, conviction, wisdom and courtesy, but without pressing their hearer, bearing in mind the words of Bahá'u'lláh: "Beware lest ye contend with any one, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. If your hearer respond, he will have responded to his own behoof, and if not, turn ye away from him, and set your faces towards God's sacred Court, the seat of resplendent holiness." (Gleanings CXXVIII)

Considerations in the Application of Bahá'í Social Teachings

[308.6] The application and development of the social aspects of the Teachings is dependent on the stage of growth of the Bahá'í community in each area, and on worldwide priorities. We are living in an age of transition, and as 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained, we must, in order to succeed in our aims, sacrifice the important for the most important. The House of Justice, for example, had to turn down the request of certain believers to establish Bahá'í schools in a Western country which already had a functioning state educational system; those Bahá'í funds which are available for educational projects must be spent on the establishment and running of schools in areas where there are large Bahá'í communities of poor people, with no adequate system of education available to them. In its answer, the House of Justice pointed out that if these friends, on their own initiative, wished to establish their own school, run on Bahá'í lines, and financially self-supporting, they were entirely free to do so. This highlights an aspect of the matter which is often overlooked. The social services of Bahá'ís are not restricted to what they do as a community Every Bahá'í has a duty to work and earn his living, and in choosing a career a Bahá'í should consider not only its earning capacity but also the benefit of the work to his fellowmen. All over the world Bahá'ís are rendering outstanding services in this way. 30S-i. ADJ, p. 66.

page 515

[306.7] When a Bahá'í community is very small, there is little that it can do to implement the social teachings of the Faith (beyond their impact on the behavior of individual believers), because such a community with the resources in funds and manpower at its disposal is but a drop in the ocean in comparison with the many large agencies, governmental and private, which are engaged in social improvement. When the Bahá'í community grows sufficiently large, however, its activities can and must proliferate and diversify. This development is already taking place in many parts of the world. In India, for example, the New Era School in Panchgani, which has been developing remarkably for a number of years, is closely associated with a rural development project in the villages close by that is having dramatically favorable results in the life of the villagers. In the province of Madhya Pradesh, where there are hundreds of thousands of Bahá'ís, the Rabbani School in Gwalior is educating children from the villages of the area in the Teachings of the Faith, in academic subjects and in agriculture, so that when they return to their home villages, these pupils not only promote the Faith but will influence their growth and development in every way. In Ecuador, as you no doubt know, the size of the Bahá'í community, scattered over inaccessible terrain in the high Andes, made it both necessary and possible some years ago to establish a Bahá'í radio station.2 "Radio Bahá'í," as it is known, broadcasts not only about the Faith, but has programs concerning health, agriculture, literacy and so on. It has now become so well established and highly regarded that it has been able to apply for and receive a Canadian Government grant through C.I.D.A.3 to finance the development of certain social service activities. Thus it can be seen that once the Bahá'í community attains a certain stature it is able to work in fruitful collaboration with non-Bahá'í agencies in its social activities.

[308.8] A further aspect of this kind of work is the collaboration between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations. Having consultative status with both ECOSOC and UNICEF, and long association with the Department of Public Information, the Bahá'í International Community is able to take part in conferences and consultations on many aspects of human development, both from the point of view of the Bahá'í Teachings and with the background of its extensive experience in meeting the problems of developing countries, such as illiteracy, the status of women, tribalism, racial prejudice, and so on.

[308.9] As you can see, all these developments relate directly to the teaching work inasmuch as the Bahá'í communities must reach a certain size before they can begin to implement many of them. How, for example, can a Bahá'í community demonstrate effectively the abolition of prejudices which divide the

inhabitants of a country until it has a cross-section of those inhabitants within its ranks? A seed is the vital origin of a tree and of a tremendous importance for that reason, but it cannot produce fruit until it has grown into a tree and flowered and fruited. So a Bahá'í community of nine believers is a vital step, since it can bring into being for that locality the divine institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly, but it is still only a seed, and needs to grow in size and in the diversity of its members before it can produce really convincing fruit for its fellow citizens.

[308.10] One could say, however, that the Bahá'í communities could assist in social development from a very early stage in their development by supporting the activities of other groups who are, at this point, more numerous and powerful. To some extent this is true, provided that such involvement does not divert the efforts of the friends from the more fundamentally important teaching work or involve them in the disputes of non-Bahá'í rival groups.

Humanity's Most Urgent Need

308.11 The teaching work is of primary importance for this reason: the most urgent need of human beings is to recognize the Manifestation of God and thereby to learn how to collaborate constructively. All over the world tremendous efforts are being made to improve the lot of mankind or of parts of mankind, but most of these efforts are frustrated by the conflicts of aims, by corruption of the morals of those involved, by mistrust, or by fear. There is no lack of material resources in the world if they are properly used. The problem is the education of human beings in the ultimate and most important purpose of life and in how to weld the differences of opinion and outlook into a united constructive effort. Bahá'ís believe that God has revealed the purpose of life, has shown us how to attain it, has provided the ways in which we can work together and, beyond that, has given mankind the assurance both of continuing divine guidance and of divine assistance. As people learn and follow these teachings their efforts will produce durable results. In the absence of these teachings, a lifetime of effort only too often ends in disillusionment and the collapse of all that has been built.

[308.12] It is not easy for people to learn the Bahá'í way, to overcome their inherited prejudices or to resist their personal temptations. This way takes time, is subject to checks and backsliding, but one can see, looking at the past 138 years, that there is an overall advance that is astonishing in the light of the obstacles to be overcome, and is accelerating with every passing decade.

Obstacle to Progress: Getting Sucked Into Prevailing Attitudes

[308.13] One of the great obstacles to progress is the tendency of Bahá'ís to be sucked into the general attitudes and disputes that surround them, to be influenced, for example, as you yourself pointed out, by the prevailing attitude to marriage so that the divorce rate becomes a problem within the Bahá'í

page 517

community itself which should be an example to the rest of society in such matters. Involvement in politics and controversial questions is another aspect of the same phenomenon. In one of His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh warns the Bahá'ís: "Dispute not with any one concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men -- hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue." (Gleanings CXXVIII) As you realize, this cannot mean that Bahá'ís must not be controversial since, in many societies, being a Bahá'í is itself a controversial matter. The central importance of this principle of avoidance of politics and controversial matters is that Bahá'ís should not allow themselves to be drawn into the disputes of the many conflicting elements of the society around them. The aim of the Bahá'ís is to reconcile, to heal divisions, to bring about tolerance and mutual respect among men, and this aim is undermined if we allow ourselves to be swept along by the ephemeral passions of others. This does not mean that Bahá'ís cannot collaborate with any non-Bahá'í movement; it does mean that good judgment is required to distinguish those activities and associations which are beneficial and constructive from those which are divisive.

The Uniqueness of the Bahá'í Covenant

[308.14] The House of Justice hopes that these explanations will help you to understand some of the aspects of the Faith that have been troubling you. The crux of the matter, as you realize, is the acceptance of spiritual authority and what this implies. You express the fear that the authority conferred upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice could lead to a progressive reduction in the "available scope for personal interpretation," and that 11 the actual writings of the Manifestation will have less and less import," and you instance what has happened in previous Dispensations. The House of Justice suggests that, in thinking about this, you contemplate the way the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh has actually worked, and you will be able to see how very different its processes are from those of, say, the development of the law in Rabbinical Judaism or the functioning of the Papacy in Christianity. The practice in the past in these two religions, and also to a great extent in Islam, has been to assume that the Revelation given by the Founder was the final, perfect revelation of God's Will to mankind, and all subsequent elucidation and

legislation has been interpretative in the sense that it aimed at applying this basic Revelation to the new problems and situations that have arisen. The Bahá'í premises are quite different. Although the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is accepted as the Word of God and His Law as the Law of God, it is understood from the outset that Revelation is progressive, and that the Law, although the Will of God for this Age, will undoubtedly be changed by the next Manifestation of God. Secondly, only the written text of the Revelation is regarded as authoritative. There is no Oral Law as in Judaism, no Tradition

page 518

of the Church as in Christianity, no Hadith as in Islam. Thirdly, a clear distinction is drawn between interpretation and legislation. Authoritative interpretation is the exclusive prerogative of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, while infallible legislation is the function of the Universal House of Justice.

[308.15] If you study the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of the Guardian, you will see how tremendously they differ from the interpretations of the Rabbis and the Church. They are not a progressive fossilization of the Revelation, they are for the most part expositions which throw a clear light upon passages which may have been considered obscure, they point up the intimate interrelationship between various teachings, they expound the implications of scriptural allusions, and they educate the Bahá'ís in the tremendous significances of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh. Rather than in any way supplanting the Words of the Manifestation, they lead us back to them time and again.

Authoritative vs. Individual interpretation

[308.16] There is also an important distinction made in the Faith between authoritative interpretation, as described above, and the interpretation which every believer is fully entitled to voice. Believers are free, indeed are encouraged, to study the Writings for themselves and to express their understanding of them. Such personal interpretations can be most illuminating, but all Bahá'ís, including the one expressing the view, however learned he may be, should realize that it is only a personal view and can never be upheld as a standard for others to accept, nor should disputes ever be permitted to arise over differences in such opinions.

Interpretation and Legislation

[308.17] The legislation enacted by the Universal House of Justice is different from interpretation. Authoritative interpretation, as uttered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian,

is a divinely guided statement of what the Word of God means. The divinely inspired legislation of the Universal House of Justice does not attempt to say what the revealed Word means-it states what must be done in cases where the revealed Text or its authoritative interpretation is not explicit. It is, therefore, on quite a different level from the Sacred Text, and the Universal House of justice is empowered to abrogate or amend its own legislation whenever it judges the conditions make this desirable. Moreover, the attitude to legislation is different in the Bahá'í Faith. The human tendency in past Dispensations has been to want every question answered and to arrive at a binding decision affecting every small detail of belief or practice. The tendency in the Bahá'í Dispensation, from the time of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, has been to clarify the governing principles, to make binding pronouncements on details which are considered essential, but to leave a wide area to the conscience of the individual. The same tendency appears also in administrative matters. The Guardian used to state that the working of National Spiritual

page 519

Assemblies should be uniform in essentials but that diversity in secondary matters was not only permissible but desirable. For this reason a number of points are not expressed in the, National Bahá'í Constitution (the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of National Assemblies); these are left to each National Spiritual Assembly to decide for itself.4

The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh

[308.18] The Covenant is the "axis of the oneness of the world of humanity' because it preserves the unity and integrity of the Faith itself and protects it from being disrupted by individuals who are convinced that only their understanding of the Teachings is the right one-a fate that has overcome all past Revelations. The Covenant is, moreover, embedded in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Thus, as you clearly see, to accept Bahá'u'lláh is to accept His Covenant; to reject His Covenant is to reject Him.

[308.19] The House of Justice asks us to assure you of its loving prayers at the Sacred Threshold for your guidance in your efforts to arrive at a greater understanding of this wonderful Revelation. With loving greetings, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE Note 308-4. The Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly are published in each volume of The Bahá'í World beginning with volume 3.

Comments

Baha'i History - January 3. On this date in 2011, the NSA of the U.S. sent a message to American Bahá'ís addressing homosexuality and civil rights.

Original file: 0405.html (position #174)

January 3. On this date in 2011, the NSA of the U.S. sent a message to American Bahá'ís addressing homosexuality and civil rights.

National Spiritual Assembly

of the Bahá'ís of the United States

January 3, 2011

To the American Bahá'í community

Dearest Bahá'í Friends,

The National Spiritual Assembly understands that homosexuality is a subject of particular interest and concern to many in this country and is, therefore, moved to share with you a letter dated October 27, 2010, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice on this topic. A copy of the letter—addressed to an American Bahá'í—was received by our Assembly, and the Supreme Body has kindly granted us permission to share it with you:

> *...With respect to your question concerning the position Bahá'ís are to take regarding homosexuality and civil rights, we have been asked to convey the following.*

> *The purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is the realization of the organic unity of the entire human race, and Bahá'ís are enjoined to eliminate from their lives all forms of prejudice and to manifest respect towards all. Therefore, to regard those with a homosexual orientation with prejudice or disdain would be against the spirit of the Faith. Furthermore, a Bahá'í is exhorted to be "an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression", and it would be entirely appropriate for a believer to come to the defense of those whose fundamental rights are being denied or violated.*
>
> *At the same time, you are no doubt aware of the relevant teachings of the Faith that govern the personal conduct of Bahá'ís. The Bahá'í Writings state that marriage is a union between a man and a woman and that sexual relations are restricted to a couple who are married to each other. Other passages from the Writings state that the practice of homosexuality is not permitted. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh on personal morality are binding on Bahá'ís, who strive, as best they can, to live up to the high standards He has established.*
>
> *In attempting to reconcile what may appear to be conflicting obligations, it is important to understand that the Bahá'í community does not seek to impose its values on others, nor does it pass judgment on others on the basis of its own moral standards. It does not see itself as one among competing social groups and organizations, each vying to establish its particular social agenda. In working for social justice, Bahá'ís must inevitably distinguish between those dimensions of public issues that are in keeping with the Bahá'í Teachings, which they can actively support, and those that are not, which they would neither promote nor necessarily oppose. In connection with issues of concern to homosexuals, the former would be freedom from discrimination and the latter the opportunity for civil marriage. Such distinctions are unavoidable when addressing any social issue. For example, Bahá'ís actively work for the establishment of world peace but, in the process, do not engage in partisan political activities directed against particular governments.*

We felt it important that the friends have access to this guidance from the House of Justice, and trust that you will find it helpful.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Kenneth E. Bowers

Secretary

Comments

January 3. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and one in London, England.

January 3. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and one in London, England.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in

good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual

election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Comments

January 3. On this date in 1914, David Ruhe, a member of the UHJ from 1968 to 1993, was born. According to one source, the Ruhi Institute was named after him as well as after the father of Farzam Arbab, who founded the Ruhi Institute and served on the UHJ from 1993 to 2013.

Original file: 0403.html (position #172)

January 3. On this date in 1914, David Ruhe, a member of the Universal House of Justice from 1968 to 1993, was born. According to one source, the Ruhi Institute was named after him as well as after the father of Farzam Arbab, who founded the Ruhi Institute and served on the Universal House of Justice from 1993 to 2013.

David S. Ruhe was born on January 3, 1913. He would go on to become a medical doctor, filmmaker, and author who served in various positions within the hierarchy of the Bahá'í

Administrative Order, including as a member of the Universal House of Justice from 1968 to 1993.

Having graduated from the Temple University School of Medicine in 1941, David Ruhe would go on to conduct malaria research at the United States Public Health Service where he would eventually become medical director. In l954 he would go to the University of Kansas School of Medicine where became the first professor of Medical Communications.

He made scores of medical films, winning awards for his productions from the Golden Reel, the Venice Film Festival, and the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain. In the course of his work in medical education, he was appointed director of the Medical Film Institute for the Association of American Medical Colleges.

After his conversion to the Bahá'í Faith, in 1941, Ruhe became an active member of the Bahá'í community, serving on numerous Local Spiritual Assemblies and national Bahá'í committees. Elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States in 1959, he served as its secretary from 1963 until 1968, when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice. He would serve on that body until retiring in 1993

Upon his retirement from the Universal House of Justice in 1993, Ruhe and his wife, Margaret, returned to New York State. They have two sons, Christopher, who is a musician, and Douglas, who at one time co-owned United Press International with fellow Bahá'í William Geissler.

David S. Ruhe died on September 6, 2005.

Writings

Ruhe, David (1983). Door of Hope: The Bahá'í Faith in the Holy Land. Oxford, England: George Ronald Publisher Ltd.

Ruhe, David (1997). Robe of Light: The Persian Years of the Supreme Prophet, Bahá'u'lláh. Oxford, England: George Ronald Publisher Ltd.

Comments

Baha'i History - January 3. On this date in 1979, the Universal House of Justice wrote the "Participants in the Bahá'í Studies Seminar held in Cambridge" regarding Bahá'í scholarship and the need for pre-publication review.

Original file: 0402.html (position #171)

January 3. On this date in 1979, the Universal House of Justice wrote the "Participants in the Bahá'í Studies Seminar held in Cambridge" regarding Bahá'í scholarship and the need for pre-publication review.

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

3 January 1979

To the Participants in the Bahá'í Studies Seminar held in Cambridge on 30 September and 1 October 1978

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has read with great interest the report of your seminar. It regards Bahá'í scholarship as of great potential importance for the development and consolidation of the Bahá'í community as it emerges from obscurity. It noted that there are a number of problems with which you have been grappling, and while it feels that it should, in general, leave the working out of solutions to Bahá'í scholars themselves, the House of Justice has the impression that it would be helpful to provide you, at this relatively early stage of the development of Bahá'í scholarship, with a few thoughts on matters raised during your seminar. Reports of your seminar were therefore referred to the Research Department, and the Universal House of Justice commends to your study the enclosed memorandum which that Department has prepared.

The House of Justice also urges you not to feel constrained in any way in consulting it about problems, whether theoretical or practical, that you meet in your work. It has noted, for example, the difficulties presented by the current temporary requirement for the review of publications, and in this connection it asks us to inform you that it has already established the policy that doctoral theses do not have to be reviewed unless there is a proposal to publish them in larger quantities than is required by the examining body.

You are still in the early stages of a very challenging and promising development in the life of the Bahá'í community, and the Universal House of Justice is eager to foster and assist your work in whatever ways it can. We are to assure you of its prayers in the Sacred Shrines on behalf of you all and of the progress of Bahá'í scholarship.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Bahá'í Studies Seminar on Ethics and Methodology Held in Cambridge on 30 September and 1 October 1978

Comments by the Research Department at the World Center

This seminar seems to have provided a very valuable forum for the discussion of a number of aspects of Bahá'í scholarship, and the airing of certain problems which have been worrying some of the friends in relationship to their work and to their fellow believers. We believe that many of the problems arise from an attempt by some Bahá'í scholars to make use of methodologies devised by non-Bahá'ís without thinking through the implications of such a course and without working out a methodology which would be in consonance with the spirit of the Faith. The seminar itself may well prove to be an initial step in such a working out. The following remarks are intended merely to draw attention to certain

aspects which we believe can help to advance this process.

It has become customary in the West to think of science and religion as occupying two distinct—and even opposed—areas of human thought and activity. This dichotomy can be characterized in the pairs of antitheses: faith and reason; value and fact. It is a dichotomy which is foreign to Bahá'í thought and should, we feel, be regarded with suspicion by Bahá'í scholars in every field. The principle of the harmony of science and religion means not only that religious teachings should be studied with the light of reason and evidence as well as of faith and inspiration, but also that everything in this creation, all aspects of human life and knowledge, should be studied in the light of revelation as well as in that of purely rational investigation. In other words, a Bahá'í scholar, when studying a subject, should not lock out of his mind any aspect of truth that is known to him.

It has, for example, become commonplace to regard religion as the product of human striving after truth, as the outcome of certain climates of thought and conditions of society. This has been taken, by many non-Bahá'í thinkers, to the extreme of denying altogether the reality or even the possibility of a specific revelation of the Will of God to mankind through a human Mouthpiece. A Bahá'í who has studied the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, who has accepted His claim to be the Manifestation of God for this Age, and who has seen His Teachings at work in his daily life, knows as the result of rational investigation, confirmed by actual experience, that true religion, far from being the product solely of human striving after truth, is the fruit of the creative Word of God which, with divine power, transforms human thought and action.

A Bahá'í, through this faith in, this "conscious knowledge" of, the reality of divine Revelation, can distinguish, for instance, between Christianity, which is the divine message given by Jesus of Nazareth, and the development of Christendom, which is the history of what men did with that message in subsequent centuries, a distinction which has become blurred if not entirely obscured in current Christian theology. A Bahá'í scholar conscious of this distinction will not make the mistake of regarding the sayings and beliefs of certain Bahá'ís at any one time as being the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í Faith is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: His Own Words as interpreted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian. It is a revelation of such staggering magnitude that no Bahá'í at this early stage in Bahá'í history can rightly claim to have more than a partial and imperfect understanding of it. Thus, Bahá'í historians would see the overcoming of early misconceptions held by the Bahá'í community, or by parts of the Bahá'í community, not as "developments of the Bahá'í Faith"—as a non-Bahá'í historian might well regard them—but as growth of that community's understanding of the Bahá'í Revelation.

It has been suggested that the words of Bahá'u'lláh that a true seeker should "so cleanse his heart that no remnant of either love or hate may linger therein, lest that love blindly incline him to error, or that hate repel him away from the truth," support the viewpoint of methodological agnosticism. But we believe that on deeper reflection it will be recognized that love and hate are emotional attachments or repulsions that can irrationally influence the seeker; they are not aspects of the truth itself. Moreover, the whole passage concerns taking "the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days" and is summarized by Bahá'u'lláh in the words: "Our purpose in revealing these convincing and weighty utterances is to impress upon the seeker that he should regard all else beside God as transient, and count all things save Him, Who is the Object of all adoration, as utter nothingness." It is in this context that He says, near the beginning of the passage, that the seeker must, "before all else, cleanse and purify his heart ... from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy." It is similar, we think, to Bahá'u'lláh's injunction to look upon the Manifestation with His Own eyes. In scientific investigation when searching after the facts of any matter a Bahá'í must, of course, be entirely open-minded, but in his interpretation of the facts and his evaluation of evidence we do not see by what logic he can ignore the truth of the Bahá'í Revelation which he has already accepted; to do so would, we feel, be both hypocritical and unscholarly.

Undoubtedly the fact that Bahá'í scholars of the history and teachings of the Faith believe in the Faith that they are studying will be a grave flaw in the eyes of many non-Bahá'í academics, whose own dogmatic materialism passes without comment because it is fashionable; but this difficulty is one that Bahá'í scholars share with their fellow believers in many fields of human endeavor.

If Bahá'í scholars will try to avoid this snare of allowing a divorce between their faith and their reason, we are sure that they will also avoid many of the occasions for tension arising between themselves and their fellow believers.

The sundering of science and religion is but one example of the tendency of the human mind (which is necessarily limited in its capacity) to concentrate on one virtue, one aspect of truth, one goal, to the exclusion of others. This leads, in extreme cases, to fanaticism and the utter distortion of truth, and in all cases to some degree of imbalance and inaccuracy. A scholar who is imbued with an understanding of the broad teachings of the Faith will always remember that being a scholar does not exempt him from the primal duties and purposes for which all human beings are created. All men, not scholars alone, are exhorted to seek out and uphold the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. But they are also exhorted to be wise in their utterance, to be tolerant of the views of others, to be courteous

in their behavior and speech, not to sow the seeds of doubt in faithful hearts, to look at the good rather than at the bad, to avoid conflict and contention, to be reverent, to be faithful to the Covenant of God, to promote His Faith and safeguard its honor, and to educate their fellowmen, giving milk to babes and meat to those who are stronger.

Scholarship has a high station in the Bahá'í teachings, and Bahá'í scholars have a great responsibility. We believe that they would do well to concentrate upon the ascertainment of truth—of a fuller understanding of the subject of their scholarship, whatever its field—not upon exposing and attacking the errors of others, whether they be of non-Bahá'í or of their fellow believers. Inevitably the demonstration of truth exposes the falsity of error, but the emphasis and motive are important. We refer to these words of Bahá'u'lláh:

Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindliness and goodwill. If it be accepted, if it fulfill its purpose, your object is attained. If any one should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him. A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding....

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh CXXXII)

and again:

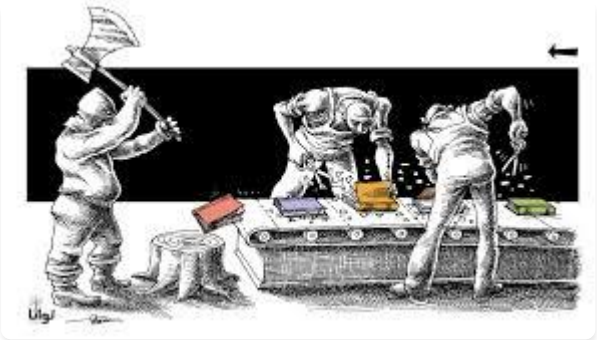
Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindliness and goodwill. Help him to see and recognize the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh V)

In our view there are two particular dangers to which Bahá'í scholars are exposed, and which they share with those believers who rise to eminent positions in the administration of the Cause. One danger is faced by only a few: those whose work requires them to read the writings of Covenant-breakers. They have to remember that they are by no means immune to the spiritual poison that such works distill, and that they must approach this aspect of their work with great caution, alert to the danger that it presents. The second danger, which may well be as insidious, is that of spiritual pride and arrogance. Bahá'í scholars, especially those who are scholars in the teachings and history of the Faith itself, would be well advised to remember that scholars have often been most wrong when they

have been most certain that they were right. The virtues of moderation, humility and humor in regard to one's own work and ideas are a potent protection against this danger.

We feel that by following such avenues of approach as those described in this memorandum Bahá'í scholars will find that many of the "fears, doubts and anxieties" which were aired at the seminar will be dispelled.



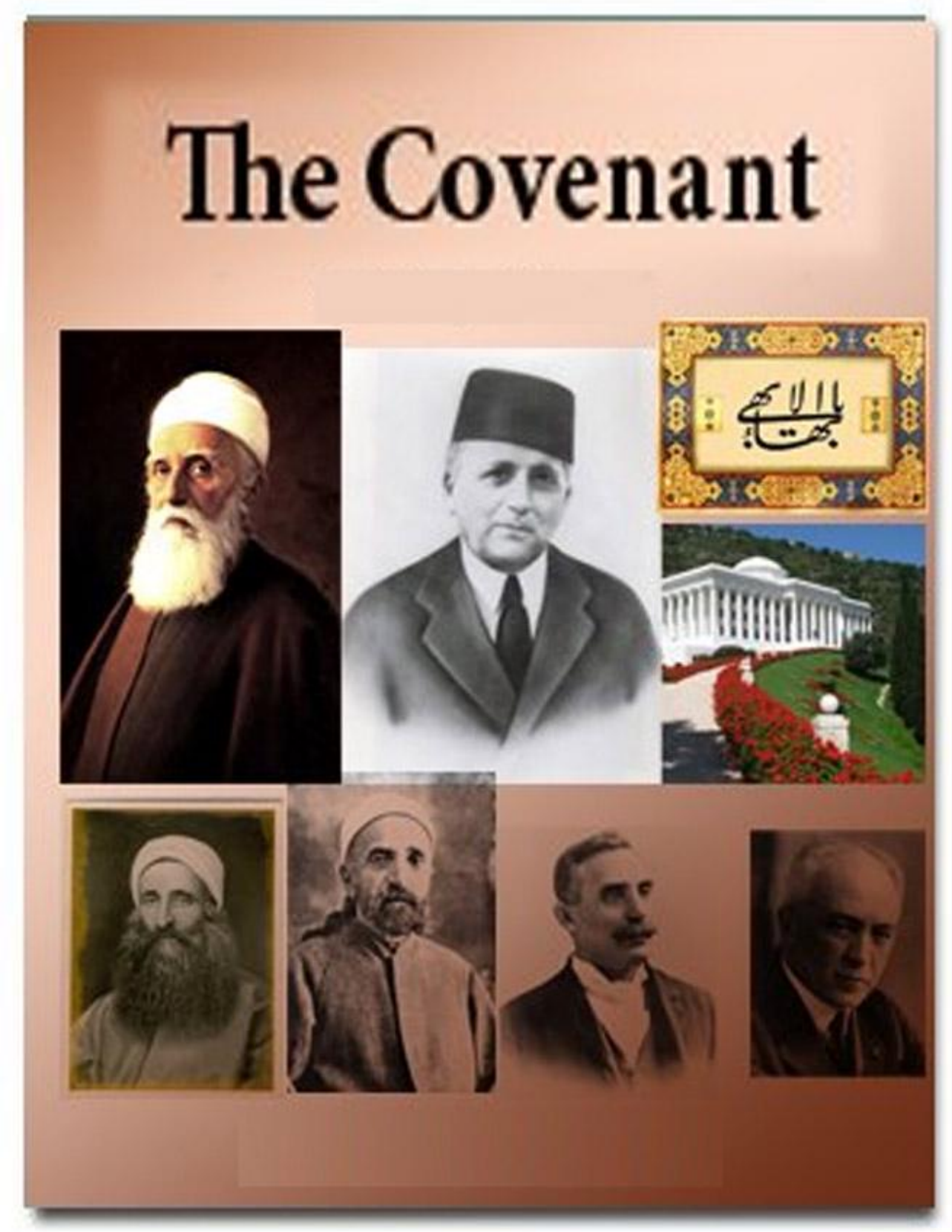
Comments

January 3. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote "The Covenant is the 'axis of the oneness of the world of humanity' because it preserves the unity and integrity of the Faith itself ...to accept Bahá'u'lláh is to accept His Covenant; to reject His Covenant is to reject Him."

January 3. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Covenant is the 'axis of the oneness of the world of humanity' because it preserves the unity and integrity of the Faith itself ...to accept Bahá'u'lláh is to accept His Covenant; to reject His Covenant is to reject Him."

> *The Covenant is the "axis of the oneness of the world of humanity" because it preserves the unity and integrity of the Faith itself and protects it from being disrupted by individuals who are convinced that only their understanding of the Teachings is the right one - a fate that has overcome all past Revelations. The*

> *Covenant is, moreover, embedded in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Thus, as you clearly see, to accept Bahá'u'lláh is to accept His Covenant; to reject His Covenant is to reject Him.*
>
> *(3 January 1982, from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)*



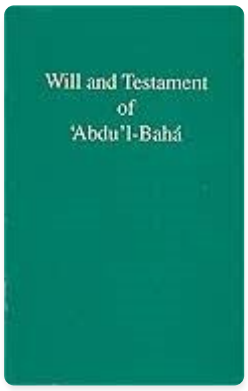
Comments

January 3. On this date in 1922, 35 days after 'Abdu’l-Bahá's death, the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was officially read in public.

Original file: 0400.html (position #169)

January 3. On this date in 1922, 35 days after 'Abdu’l-Bahá's death, the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* was officially read in public.

For further reading, please refer to Chapter 2 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "The Passing of 'Abdu’l-Bahá and Its Immediate Consequences", and *The Life of Shoghi Effendi*.



Comments

January 4. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice wrote all NSAs marking the commencement of construction projects on Mount Carmel.

Original file: 0399.html (position #168)

January 4. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice wrote all NSAs marking the commencement of construction projects on Mount Carmel.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *4 January 1994*
>
> *To all National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friends,*
>
> *As construction work commences on the first of the monumental Edifices which must be raised on Mount Carmel to complete the World Administrative Center of the Bahá'í Faith, it seems appropriate to review the significance of this vast project and to reflect on its basic purpose.*
>
> *The projects under way on this mountain are of profound significance. They represent much more than the erection of buildings to meet the expanding needs of the Bahá'í World Centre. The call for contributions to the Arc Projects Fund, far from being a diversion of resources which might otherwise be used to help relieve the distress of mankind, offers the followers of Bahá'u'lláh a providential*

opportunity to participate in an endeavor which is central to the work of the Faith in eradicating the causes of the appalling suffering now afflicting humanity.

The Bahá'í community encourages and supports the manifold efforts being made by people of goodwill to better the condition of humankind and promote unity and harmony among the peoples and nations of the earth. However, the believers should never, for even one moment, lose sight of the fact that the crisis now engulfing every part of the planet is essentially spiritual. "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world," Bahá'u'lláh emphatically states, "is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith." Our acute awareness of the magnitude of the misery which so many groups and individuals are experiencing should spur us on to ever-greater exertions, inspired and animated by an abiding consciousness that only through the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh can the multitudinous problems burdening humanity be resolved.

From the dawn of Bahá'í history, attention has been directed to the glory of the World Order which the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is destined to unfold. The Báb Himself declared, "Well is it with him who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh and rendereth thanks unto his Lord!" while Bahá'u'lláh affirmed, in the Mother Book of His Dispensation, that "the world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order." It is abundantly evident that the exalted aims of the Faith can be accomplished only through the instrumentality of the World Order which Bahá'u'lláh has established for that purpose. The spiritual transformation of humanity, the relief of the diverse peoples of the earth from rampant suffering, the attainment and preservation of true peace in the world, the birth of a world civilization—all such noble objectives of the Cause of God will remain unrealized unless they are associated with that radical change in the structure and functioning of human society inherent in the growth and fruition of His divinely ordained Order. The institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, now being raised in all parts of the world through the endeavors of the believers, are the precursor, the nucleus and the pattern of that World Order which will, in the course of time, exert its full benevolent influence on all the peoples of the earth.

Shoghi Effendi explained that the revelation by Bahá'u'lláh of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas "preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest." And he referred to "the triple impulse generated

through the revelation of the Tablet of Carmel by Bahá'u'lláh and the Will and Testament as well as the Tablets of the Divine Plan bequeathed by the Center of His Covenant—the three Charters which have set in motion three distinct processes, the first operating in the Holy Land for the development of the institutions of the Faith at its World Center and the other two, throughout the rest of the Bahá'í world, for its propagation and the establishment of its Administrative Order." These three processes, although distinct, are closely interrelated. Developments at the World Center of the Faith, the heart and nerve-center of the Administrative Order, must necessarily exert a pronounced influence on the organic body of the worldwide Bahá'í community, and be affected by its vitality. The Administrative Order may best be viewed as the chief instrument for the prosecution of the Divine Plan, while that Plan has become recognized as the most potent agency for the development of the administrative structure of the Faith. It follows that, for the sound and balanced growth of the Faith and the speedy attainment of world order, due attention must be paid to all three processes.

The construction work now in progress on Mount Carmel should be seen as a major historic thrust in the development of the first of these three mighty processes—a process which was launched more than one hundred years ago by Bahá'u'lláh Himself when He pitched His tent on this Holy Mountain and revealed the Tablet described by the Guardian as "the Charter of the World Spiritual and Administrative Centers of the Faith." The unfoldment of this process has been distinguished by the interment of the sacred remains of the Báb in the bosom of this mountain within a sanctuary built by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, followed subsequently by the erection of the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb by Shoghi Effendi. When, in 1939, the Guardian transferred the bodily remains of the brother and mother of the Master to their final resting-place in the immediate vicinity of that of the Greatest Holy Leaf, he described his action as one which "incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Báb's overshadowing Sepulcher," is designated to be the "focal center of these world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions" which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are raising for the salvation of humanity and the fulfillment of its glorious destiny.

Shortly before his passing, the Guardian completed the structure of the International Bahá'í Archives, "the first stately Edifice destined to usher in the establishment of the World Administrative Center of the Faith on Mount Carmel—the Ark referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the closing passages of His Tablet of Carmel."

In more recent years the contributions of the believers around the world permitted construction of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the second of the Edifices which Shoghi Effendi had envisaged as being located on a far-flung arc, surrounding the resting-places of the members of the Holy Family. This achievement opened the way for the announcement in 1987 of the project for erection of the remaining buildings of the World Administrative Center of the Faith and for the construction of the eighteen monumental Terraces contemplated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, below and above the Shrine of the Báb. It signaled a major step toward the consummation of the vision expressed by the Guardian as "the splendor of the institutions which that triumphant Faith must erect on the slopes of a mountain, destined to be so linked with the city of 'Akká that a single grand metropolis will be formed to enshrine the spiritual as well as the administrative seats of the future Bahá'í Commonwealth."

The Edifices and Terraces now under construction are a manifest expression of the emergence from obscurity of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and of the determining role it is ordained to play in the affairs of humankind. When the buildings are completed, they will stand as the visible seat of mighty institutions whose purpose is no other than the spiritualization of humanity and the preservation of justice and unity throughout the world. The future significance of the Terraces is evident from their characterization by Shoghi Effendi as "the Pathway of the Kings and Rulers of the World." The beauty and magnificence of the Gardens and Terraces now under development are symbolic of the nature of the transformation which is destined to occur both within the hearts of the world's peoples and in the physical environment of the planet.

The establishment of the World Administrative Center of the Faith on Mount Carmel at this juncture in the fortunes of mankind is essential to hasten the accomplishment of God's purpose for humanity through the operation of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The believers are called upon to sustain this vast collective enterprise upon which the community of the Most Great Name is now embarked, through a sacrificial outpouring of material resources and through their dedication to the work of the Cause at this time of unprecedented need and opportunity.

Mount Carmel was extolled by the prophet Isaiah almost three thousand years ago, when he announced that "it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Now, with the

> *coming of the Lord of Hosts, His devoted servants throughout the world have been summoned to the momentous undertaking with which the fulfillment of this ancient promise is associated. As they dedicate themselves to this mighty task, let them draw inspiration from these Words of Bahá'u'lláh: "Carmel, in the Book of God, hath been designated as the Hill of God, and His Vineyard. It is here that, by the grace of the Lord of Revelation, the Tabernacle of Glory hath been raised. Happy are they that attain thereunto; happy they that set their faces towards it."*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *[signed: The Universal House of Justice]*

Comments

January 4. On this date in 1913, Malietoa Tanumafili II was born. He was the first head of state and reigning constitutional monarch to convert to the Bahá’í Faith.

January 4. On this date in 1913, Malietoa Tanumafili II was born. He was the first head of state and reigning constitutional monarch to convert to the Bahá’í Faith.

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha’i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

Interestingly, while Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá’í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim:

> *"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were*

> *receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."*

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

January 4. On this date in 1908, Helen Mirrell Goodall, later named a Disciples of 'Abdu’l-Bahá, and her daughter Ella Goodall Cooper arrived in Acre to visit 'Abdu’l-Bahá. They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908".

Original file: 0397.html (position #166)

January 4. On this date in 1908, Helen Mirrell Goodall, later named a Disciples of 'Abdu’l-Bahá, and her daughter Ella Goodall Cooper arrived in Acre to visit 'Abdu’l-Bahá. They would later write a book about this visit, titled *Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908*, which among other things chronicles Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali's description of Bahá'u'lláh's exile accompanied with "Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen" after "the Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf." The book also recounts "The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy Bab and Bahá'u'lláh was accorded us just before we left Akka. This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty is the only one in existence. How perfectly that noble

Face and Form embody the Words, 'The King has come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler of the Throne and of the dust!' and at the same time express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and Love."

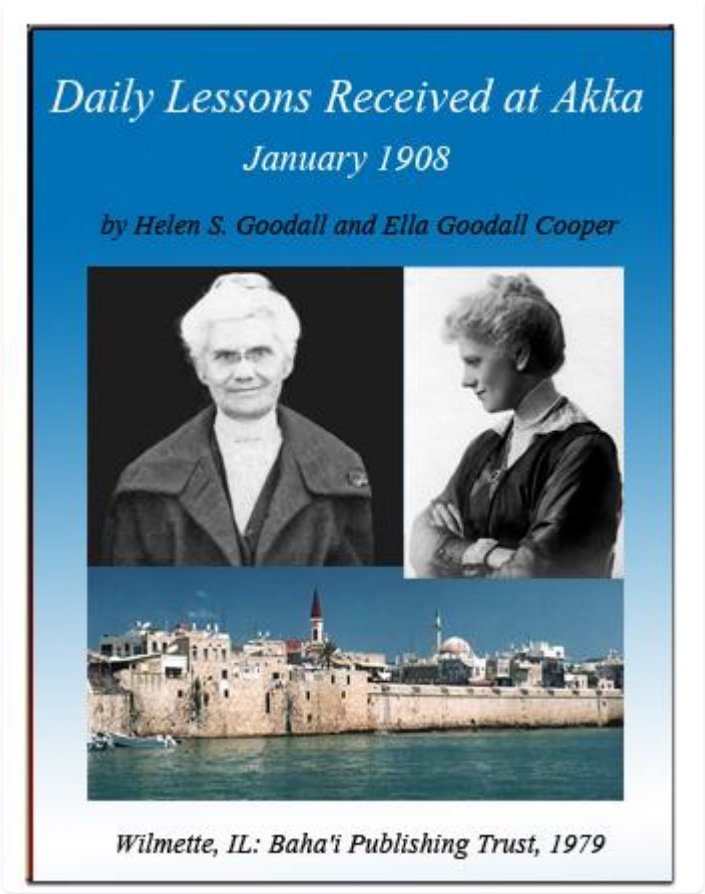
The book contains many observations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's household, daily routine and other visitors. The ladies also chronicle some the lessons they received, such as this recounting of the *Exile of Bahá'u'lláh* by Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali.

> *When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.*
>
> *Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.*
>
> *The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.*

The book also describes in the chapter titled *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH* their impressions on viewing the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh

> *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH*
>
> *The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy Bab and Bahá'u'lláh was accorded us just before we left Akka.*
>
> *This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty is the only one in existence.*

> *How perfectly that noble Face and Form embody the Words, "The King has come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler of the Throne and of the dust!" and at the same time express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and Love.*


Daily Lessons Received at Akka
January 1908
by Helen S. Goodall and Ella Goodall Cooper
Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1979

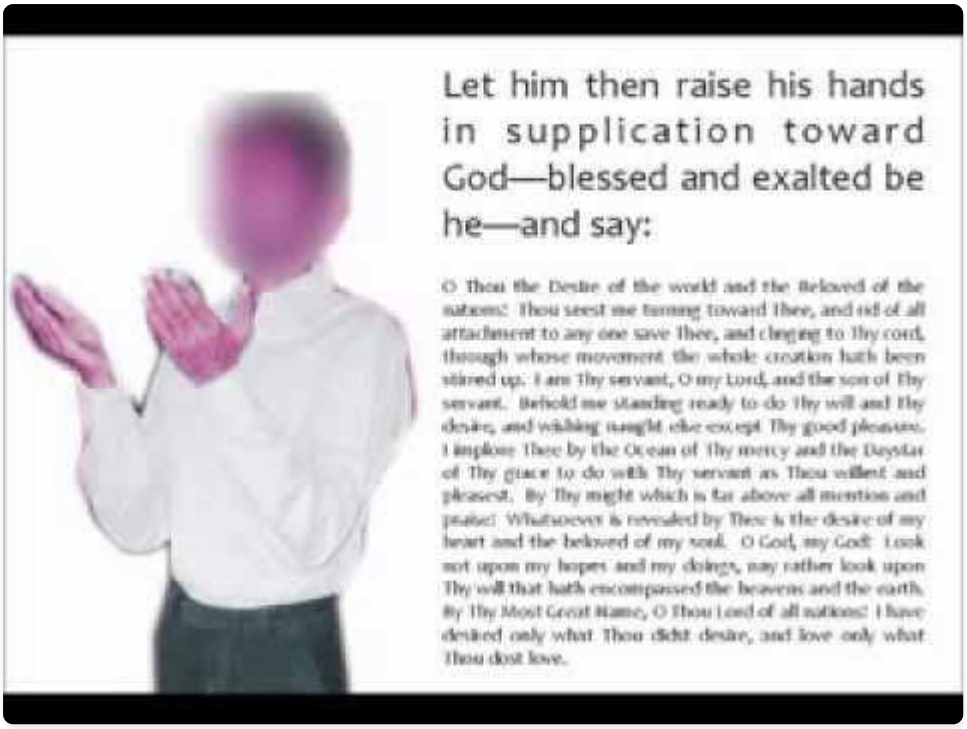
Comments

January 4. On this date in 1936, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "...the obligatory prayers are by their very nature of greater effectiveness and are endowed with a greater power than the non-obligatory ones, and as such are essential."

Original file: 0396.html (position #165)

January 4. On this date in 1936, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "...the obligatory prayers are by their very nature of greater effectiveness and are endowed with a greater power than the non-obligatory ones, and as such are essential."

> *1763. ...the obligatory prayers are by their very nature of greater effectiveness and are endowed with a greater power than the non-obligatory ones, and as such are essential.*
>
> *(4 January 1936 to an individual believer)*


Let him then raise his hands in supplication toward God—blessed and exalted be he—and say:
O Thou the Desire of the world and the Beloved of the nations! Thou seest me turning toward Thee, and rid of all attachment to any one save Thee, and clinging to Thy cord, through whose movement the whole creation hath been stirred up. I am Thy servant, O my Lord, and the son of Thy servant. Behold me standing ready to do Thy will and Thy desire, and wishing naught else except Thy good pleasure. I implore Thee by the Ocean of Thy mercy and the Daystar of Thy grace to do with Thy servant as Thou willest and pleasest. By Thy might which is far above all mention and praise! Whatsoever is revealed by Thee is the desire of my heart and the beloved of my soul. O God, my God! Look not upon my hopes and my doings, nay rather look upon Thy will that hath encompassed the heavens and the earth. By Thy Most Great Name, O Thou Lord of all nations! I have desired only what Thou didst desire, and love only what Thou dost love.

Comments

January 5. On this date in 1926, the eminent British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne died. He published numerous articles and books of academic value, including accounts of early Bábí and Bahá'í history, and was the only Westerner to meet Bahá’u’lláh and leave a description of the experience.

January 5. On this date in 1926, the eminent British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne died. He published numerous articles and books of academic value, including accounts of early Bábí and Bahá'í history, and was the only Westerner to meet Bahá’u’lláh and leave a description of the experience.

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled BROWNE, EDWARD GRANVILLE...

I. Browne's Life and Academic Career

E. G. Browne came of a wealthy family engaged in shipbuilding. He was at first strongly dominated by his father, Sir Benjamin Browne, who sent him to the preparatory school at Glenalmond, to Eton College, and finally to Cambridge University, where he was to study engineering or, as an ultimate compromise, science and medicine. The boy followed his father's wishes and eventually qualified, and for a short time practiced, as a doctor. But at the age of only fifteen, in 1877, his interest in the Middle East had been aroused by the Russo-Turkish War, in which characteristically his sympathy lay with the side that was unpopular in Britain, the Turks. At this point his "Oriental" studies began, with Turkish, to which Persian and Arabic were soon added. He had (and continued to have) little or no interest in philology as such, and his methods seem to have been entirely pragmatic: the autodidactic use of any manuals and texts he could find, consultation with real and pretended experts, and the genial exploitation of various native speakers, who could nearly always be found in England in the great days of empire. The results, to judge by the reports of his contemporaries and his own published work, were stupendously successful.

Upon his graduation in the Cambridge Natural Sciences Tripos in 1882, he was "bribed" by his father to persevere in his medical studies with the gift of a summer trip to Istanbul (or, as it was still known in Europe, Constantinople). In 1884, on his own initiative, he also took the so-called "Indian" Languages (in fact, languages of the Islamic world) Tripos at Cambridge. There followed three years of further medical study, internship, and practice, interrupted, whenever the occasion allowed, for pursuit of his private, "Oriental" interests. In 1887 be achieved both his final medical qualifications and a fellowship from his Cambridge college (Pembroke), which enabled him to spend his celebrated year in Iran—for it was by then unquestionably Persian studies that were claiming his main attention. It was this visit that generated the remarkable book, *A Year Amongst the Persians,* which, despite its romantic and archaic title, approach, and style, remains a classic source. It was first published in 1893, after being more than once turned down, and has since been reprinted several times under various auspices (chiefly A. C. Black and Cambridge University Press).

After his return to Britain in 1888, Browne's life was spent almost wholly in Cambridge, remaining outwardly quite unspectacular. He was first University Lecturer in Persian and then, from 1902 until his death, Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic; the latter post was one of two prestigious but ill-paid chairs nominally in the field of Arabic studies then maintained in the university. Until 1906 he lived a vigorous, if somewhat self-centered, social life as a bachelor in his college; in that year he married Alice Blackburne-Daniell, a

well-to-do and influential Roman Catholic, who enlisted his vague but generous sympathies both for Roman Catholicism and for the cause of an independent Ireland. They had two sons, neither of whom followed his father's interests, though later both lent them moral and financial support. Browne suffered a massive heart attack in November, 1924; his wife died in June, 1925, six months before his own death. The last year or so of his life was little more than a gallant holding action.

To appreciate Browne's remarkable academic achievements (as well as some of his peculiar shortcomings) at their proper evaluation, it is necessary to understand something of his personal position and the world in which he lived and worked. He was bred to wealth and status and was (particularly in his mature years) a very rich man in his own right. This meant that his time was largely his own (his statutory duties were minimal) and that he could please himself in virtually everything he did and said. He could choose his own projects, pay for them and their publication if necessary (as it often was), and personally employ such colleagues and helpers (several Iranians among them) as the university would not hire. But this situation carried its disadvantage as well. If he was generous and clever and often charming, he was also egotistical (several tributes bear witness to his fascinating but nearly always one-sided discourse); and, as frequently happens in such cases, his judgment could be willful and erratic and the self-discipline necessary for the finest academic work very difficult to achieve. His almost continuous antagonism to his own government and the establishment (related to general Middle Eastern diplomacy and the Persian "Question," Ireland, South Africa—liberals in those days were pro-Boer—anti-Germanism and concomitant pro-Russian and pro-French policy, inadequate educational measures, and so on) largely does him credit, no doubt; it certainly cost him deserved public recognition and influence. It also, however, sometimes contained elements of the arbitrary and the cranky, and anyone less privileged might well have had cause to be more circumspect. As with most of his contemporaries, all his ways seem to have been firmly set before he reached the age of thirty. He had, too, something in him of upper-class Victorian-Edwardian philistinism: Early in life he engaged in tennis, squash, and rowing, and later he took up fishing, but he had no time for art, music, religion, or indeed for languages or cultures outside his chosen field. His early enthusiasm for Turkish studies soon waned, while for "Indian" culture he seemed to cherish a marked antipathy most of his life, considering it to represent a debased version of all that he loved in Iran. He was no sybarite: Given endless cigarettes and tea, he could apparently easily dispense (for himself and his guests) with good food or wine.

Browne's work in promoting Persian studies was epoch-making, for it must be remembered that in his lifetime (and sometimes still) Islamic studies were conceived, as

the title of his chair suggests, primarily in terms of Arabic. His long-time friend, colleague, and successor R. A. Nicholson, a Persianist of almost equal note, included in his introduction to posthumous *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS belonging to the late E. G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1932) a memoir and almost complete classified bibliography of fifty-five major items that Browne had published. Although these works cannot all be listed here, some of the largest or most important demand comment.

First, unquestionably, is the monumental *Literary History of Persia,* the four volumes of which appeared in 1902, 1906, 1920, and 1924. It is a work that fully displays Browne's strengths and weaknesses: broad in scope (and ranging far beyond literature as such), dense with nearly always accurate detail, and based almost entirely on original sources (many of which were at that time accessible only to Browne himself) but also diffuse and at times irrelevant (volume I, for example, consists largely of prolegomena, though originally intended to comprise the entire work). It also abounds in examples of Browne's and his society's prejudices, as well as reflecting some unfortunate Iranian cultural attitudes of the time (volume IV, for example, though packed with valuable material, does scant justice to the literature, art, and general high culture of the whole period 1500-1900). Volumes II and III, though now dated in information and approach and selective in interest, are fine pieces of work. The copyright to the whole enterprise, which initially had a checkered publishing history, has long been vested in Cambridge University Press, and reprints have been frequent.

Two of Browne's special concerns gave rise to a considerable number of publications from about 1890 to 1920. These concerns were respectively Babism/Bahaism and what he perceived to be the rise of true liberal democracy in Iran (see ii and iii below, with bibliographies). He also edited, translated, and encouraged others to work on a number of important classical texts that had come to his notice during the preparation of his Literary History. Among the most important of his own contributions are editions of *Tadhkiratu ʾsh-Shuʿará* of Dawlatšāh (1901), *Lubábuʾl-Albáb* of ʿAwfī (with Mīrzā Moḥammad Qazvīnī; 2 vols., 1903, 1906), and in the Gibb Memorial Series *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristán* of Ebn Esfandīār (1905), *Taʾríkh-i-Guzīda* of Mostawfī (2 vols., 1910, 1913), and the revised translation of *Čahār maqāla* of Neẓāmī ʿArūżī (*Cahár Maqála,* 1921). Browne's own interest in such works was not always strictly literary, but his use of them was to prove in the long run most fortunate, for they include fine and often rare examples of medieval Persian prose. One anomalous work, *Arabian Medicine* (1921), the publication of his Fitzpatrick lectures before the Royal College of Physicians, represents a marriage of his enforced earlier studies with his own chosen field of endeavor.

Much of Browne's time and phenomenal energy were channeled into helping individuals and causes or carrying out "chores." He gave personal (including financial) assistance to a great variety of students and to Iranian and other émigrés. His role on the Persia Committee, which endeavored for some years (particularly between 1908 and 1912) to influence the British government and public opinion, was crucial—though the ultimate results were disappointing (see iii below). It did, however, win him high regard in Iran, in addition to the respect he already enjoyed among educated Iranians for his dedicated scholarship. He promoted "Oriental" studies at Cambridge in various ways, especially by encouraging academic training for candidates in the Levant Consular Service and the Egyptian, Sudanese, and Indian civil services. Many academic or quasi-academic figures emerged from this unofficial nursery of talent, among them the late Sir Reader Bullard, Laurence Lockhart, and Sir Ronald Storrs. After the early death of the Turcologist E. J. W. Gibb in 1901, Browne took responsibility for putting a large part of Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry* into final form and seeing it through the press. He was the leading executive and academic figure in publishing the invaluable Gibb Memorial Series, from a fund established by Gibb's family in 1904. Finally, it should be mentioned that he did a great deal of cataloguing work on the rich Islamic collections housed in Cambridge, which culminated in his *Handlist of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1900); a supplementary list published in 1922 also included manuscripts located in the individual colleges.

Mention has already been made of the significant failure of British (and indeed foreign) public and academic authorities to honor Browne as fully as might have been expected in the light of his achievements. The following list includes virtually all the significant marks of recognition that came his way: 1903, Fellow of the British Academy; 1911, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; 1922, Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society; 1921, on his fifty-ninth birthday, an address and presentations from admirers in Iran (where he was also made a member of the Order of the Lion and the Sun); on his sixtieth birthday a festschrift entitled *A Volume of Oriental Essays Presented to E. G. Browne* . . . (ed. Sir T. W. Arnold and R. A. Nicholson, Cambridge, 1922) but nicknamed *ʿAjab-nāma* (Book of wonders), as a play on his initials. (Typically, this book drew a sour review or two, which, though aimed at the mediocre quality of some of the articles, must inevitably have spoiled Browne's pleasure in the gesture.) Also on this occasion Browne received further letters and addresses from Iran and a number of Western countries. Ironically, his death gave rise to a host of notices conferring upon him the most extravagant praises.

ii. Browne on Babism and Bahaism

Browne first developed an intense curiosity about Babism when he read Gobineau's account in the summer of 1886, and one of his pursuits during his subsequent year-long sojourn in Iran (1887-88) was making contact with the Babis and gaining access to their manuscripts. Browne deeply admired the heroism of the Babis in the revolutionary period 1848-52, found a "sublime beauty" even in the Bab's more ungrammatical writings, and was impressed by Gobineau's account of the Babi leader Ṣobḥ-e Azal. He was thus rather taken aback to discover, upon making contact with "Babis" in Iran, that almost all had become Bahais, followers of Azal's older half-brother Bahāʾ-Allāh, who had replaced the *Bayān* with the *Aqdas* (Browne, 1889, pp. 486-87, 901, 933; idem, 1893, repr. 1926, pp. 328-29).

In true nineteenth-century style, Browne was after the pristine origins of the movement, considering later developments to be departures. He thus considered the Azalīs more reliable than the Bahais in putting him in touch with the Babi past and regretted the rivalry between the two groups. He seems early on to have taken the Azalī side in the struggle; when Iranian Bahais reproached him for inclining to Azal, he did not deny it and blamed Bahai violence toward Azalīs (1893, repr. 1926, pp. 578-79). In his 1889 papers for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* he set out for the first time in English a detailed account of the evolution of Babism and the rise of Bahaism after 1850. He entered into frequent correspondence with Azal and his followers and in the spring of 1890 voyaged to Cyprus, where he spent two weeks with Azal, then to ʿAkkā (Acre), where he spent a week with the Bahais.

Among Browne's Azalī contacts in Istanbul was Shaikh Aḥmad Rūḥī, who told him late in 1890 about a manuscript entitled *Hašt behest*, a polemic against Bahaism. Although this book had just been written by Rūḥī himself and Āqā Khan Kermānī, both sons-in-law of Azal, Rūḥī misrepresented it as the work of Āqā Javād Karbalāʾī, an eyewitness to events of early Babism. Karbalāʾī had become a Bahai, but Rūḥī told Browne that he had been an Azalī. Browne was at first excited by Hašt behešt, wrongly considering it a primary source for early Babi history and a vindication of Azal's right to head Babism after the Bab's death (1892, pp. 680-84, reporting Rūḥī's correspondence); he much later came to realize the true authorship of *Hašt behest* (idem, 1932, p. 76, para. 1; for more recent scholarship on this work and on Kermānī, see Bayat, pp. 160-61).

At ʿAkkā Browne had acquired a copy of the account of Babi and Bahai history by Bahāʾ-Allāh's son ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ, which he published with a translation and extensive annotation, as *A Traveller's Narrative* in 1891. Browne spoke highly of Bahāʾ-Allāh and ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ in his introduction to this work, but the notes (II, pp. 356-73), written later, show a

willingness to believe charges that Bahāʾ-Allāh had ordered some of his enemies assassinated; this later attitude was much influenced by the anti-Bahai calumnies of *Hašt-behešt*.

In 1893 Browne published an English translation of Mīrzā Ḥosayn Hamadānī's *Tārīḵ-ejadīd,* a late pro-Bahai account of the Babi period. Again his notes to this work betray an implicit belief that even late Azalī accounts of Babi history are somehow more authentic than Bahai accounts, whereas in fact both represent evolution away from the original ideas of pristine Babism. But Browne's interest in this subject was fading, and he turned later in the 1890s to his literary history of Iran, to which he devoted the rest of his life. His enthusiasm for the study of Babism waned for several reasons. An Oxford Magazine review (25 May 1892, p. 394) attacking his work on this topic as a waste of time stung him deeply. In addition, the constant polemics between Azalīs and Bahais pained him, as did those between partisans of ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ and those of his brothers after Bahāʾ-Allāh's death.

When Browne became caught up in the Constitutional Revolution in 1905-11, he showed some peripheral interest in whether or not the small minority of Azalī's and Bahais were participants. He concluded, however, that the Bahais, with their emphasis on world unity, were too cosmopolitan to be good nationalists, and he thought Iran needed nationalists at that point (Browne, 1910, pp. 424-29). In 1910 he published, at the urging and with the cooperation of the Shiʿite scholar Mīrzā Moḥammad Khan Qazvīnī, the manuscript of *Ketāb-e noqṭat al-kāf*, which they attributed to Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī, an early Babi who had perished in 1852. Qazvīnī wrote the Persian introduction, and Browne wrote an English preface, in which he attacked the Bahais for attempting to rewrite history (in *Tārīḵ-ejadīd*) in order to lessen the importance of the Bab in favor of Bahāʾ-Allah and accused them of suppressing *Noqṭat al-kāf*. Although it is true that this manuscript probably circulated infrequently among Bahais, the many copies of it in Bahai collections in Iran and in Haifa demonstrate that they hardly suppressed it. Furthermore, some material and attitudes expressed in *Noqṭat al-kāf* certainly postdate 1852. The work should probably be recognized, therefore, not as the "original" history, which the *Tārīḵ-ejadīd* was meant to supplant, but as an alternative tradition about early Babism, containing primary material but redacted from an Azalī point of view before the final break between Azal and Bahāʾ-Allāh. Mīrzā Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegānī and other Bahai scholars replied to Browne that they had seen Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī's early chronicle of Babism and that *Noqṭat al-kāf* was not it. A number of Azalīs and Bahais wrote or published important memoirs or chronicles in response to this publication of *Noqṭat al-kāf*; Browne deposited those sent to him in his collection but wrote nothing about them (Balyuzi, pp. 70, 72-73; Browne Coll., Cambridge University, F. 57[9] "Resāla-ye Sayyed Mehdī Dahajī"; Mīrzā Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāyegānī and

Mehdī Golpāyegānī, *Kašf al-ḡeṭā',* Tashkent, 1919).

Browne's last substantial work on Babism was the publication of a miscellany of essentially unedited materials, some of them translations, entitled *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (1918). He also included a few specimens of Babi and Bahai poetry in the fourth volume of his *Literary History of Persia* (1924) and remarked favorably on the crisp style of Bahā'-Allāh's *Ketāb-e īqān*. His obituary of 'Abd-al-Bahā', written in 1921, was, in contrast to the rather tense communications of a decade earlier, warm and appreciative and showed admiration for his promotion of racial unity in the segregated United States.

iii. Browne and the Persian Constitutional Movement

E. G. Browne was incomparably more sympathetic and devoted to the Persian Constitutional movement than was any other European. Through his numerous publications, his lectures, and the letters he published in daily newspapers, he took an active part in organizing and influencing British opinion. The Persia Committee, founded in October, 1908, by Browne and H. F. B. Lynch and composed of prominent members of both houses of Parliament, as well as writers and journalists, functioned as an active and influential pressure group both inside and outside England.

Browne's deep interest in politics had begun in the early years of his life. His admiration for the Turks in their losing struggle against Russia in the war of 1877-78 first attracted his attention to the East. It was this political commitment to weaker nations struggling against political and military penetration by the European powers that led him to begin learning Turkish, followed by Arabic and Persian, and thus laid the foundations for his brilliant academic career (see i above). Nevertheless, Persia soon supplanted Turkey as the focus of his interest and came to dominate not only his scholarly but also his political activities. He admired the "stability of national type, and power of national recovery" of Persia throughout its long history and was fascinated by such ideals as the "interdependence of all mankind" and the "obligation of tolerance towards those of other religions" that he discovered in the classical Persian epics (Browne, 1917-18, pp. 312, 313).

His own profound and humane yearning for a "universal brotherhood of mankind" (Nicholson, p. viii) corresponded to the basic principles of the Babi and Bahai religions (see ii above). It was this same deep-rooted humanitarianism, rather than any reasoned theory of nationalism, that led Browne to identify himself with popular movements striving for liberty. Independent in forming his views and fearless in expressing them, he generally found himself in opposition to the official policy of his government (see i above). His belief in a plurality of nations, each preserving its distinctive character, all coexisting freely and

aiding one another, was decisive in his special dedication to the Persian cause. His manifold writings on the Constitutional movement, as well as his publication of its authentic documents, were aimed at arousing sympathy for the Persian reformers (Browne, 1909, p. 5). He asserted the Persians' right of self-determination (1917-18, p. 320) and consistently deplored the means employed by England and Russia to crush the movement, especially revealing the atrocities committed by the Russians in Persia (1912a, pp. 6, 15; 1912b). A vehement opponent of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which had established Russian and British zones of influence in Persia, Browne demanded complete abolition of these zones (1917-18, p. 329), comparing partition of Persia with that of Poland (1912a, p. 17). He perceived the Constitutional movement as essentially a nationalist, rather than a democratic (1917-18, p. 323), cause, and the Persians thus fighting for their very existence as a nation (1910, p. xix).

Browne was able to obtain valuable information for his publications from the best sources available. He was not only acquainted with Jamāl-al-Dīn Afḡānī and Mīrzā Malkom Khan but also knew many of the national leaders who had been exiled to France and England after the bombardment of Parliament by Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah in 1908, among whom Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda, ʿAlī-Akbar Dehḵodā, and Moḥammad-ʿAlī Tarbīat were the most prominent. Browne was also kept well informed by correspondents in St. Petersburg and some of his former students who had entered the British consular service.

The events in Persia were of such importance to Browne that he even discontinued work on his monumental *Literary History of Persia*, the second volume of which had just been published (1906), in order to dedicate himself fully to organizing support and assistance. Indignant with the manner in which the British foreign minister, Edward Grey, was conducting affairs in Iran, the Persia Committee, with Browne as its vice-chairman, published resolutions, staged large public meetings, and pressed for Russian withdrawal from Persia. By 1911 the executive committee consisted of forty-six members, among them thirty-three Radical members of Parliament, who subjected the House of Commons to sustained debates on Persian affairs. During 1911-12 Persia was the central issue in a general "Grey must go" campaign. To all such activities pamphlets published by Browne were fundamental.

In addition to his political work, Browne did not neglect the literary aspects of the Constitutional movement, which were attractively presented in *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*. This account of the flourishing of a free press, as well as the large quantity of excellent patriotic and political verse included, was aimed at counterbalancing the "reactionary and obscurantist policy" of *The Times*, which had criticized the "mischievous

and dangerous" character of the free press in Iran (Browne, 1914, p. xii), and at refuting those who sought for political reasons to represent the Persians as decadent and incapable of governing themselves (Browne, 1910, p. xii; idem, 1914, p. xv; idem, 1909, p. 6). In particular, he emphasized the work of the secret and semisecret societies (*anjomans*) established during the revolutionary period, which provided free education in night schools, arranged for medical treatment, and organized lectures on the duties of citizenship (1909, pp. 13, 21; 1910, pp. 244-46).

Browne was held in the highest esteem by Persians. Although he had at first been disliked in Iran because of his sympathies for the persecuted Babis, he soon evoked gratitude for having taken Persia and its literature as his own and for supporting the Persian people as few others had done. To all Persians living in exile he was of infinite help and utmost generosity. When Tabrīz was occupied by the Russians in 1911, the Constitutionalists sent telegrams asking for his assistance. As for his services to Persian literature, a contemporary Persian newspaper article compared them to the Ghaznavid Sultan Maḥmūd's patronage of Ferdowsī (quoted by E. D. Ross in his introduction to the 1926 edition of Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians*, pp. xix-xx). Browne was awarded the Persian order of the Lion and the Sun, and on his sixtieth birthday he received Persian representatives who presented him with a moving illuminated address from his admirers in Iran (Arberry, p. 189). Persians today still remember Browne as one of the great men devoted to their country and its people.

Comments

January 5. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to European Bahá'ís announcing the upcoming visit of Abd al-Hosayn Ayati (known as Avarih, literally "the Wanderer") a Baha'i missionary, journalist, author and teacher who spent 18 years as missionary.

Original file: 0394.html (position #163)

January 5. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to European Bahá'ís announcing the upcoming visit of Abd al-Hosayn Ayati (known as Avarih, literally "the Wanderer") a Baha'i missionary, journalist, author and teacher who spent 18 years as missionary. He was a close companion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who conferred on him the titles of "Raʾīs-al-moballeḡīn" (Chief of Missionaries). Avarih would later become a Muslim, and the numerous references made to Avarih in John Esslemont's book "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" were removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

January 5. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to European Bahá'ís

announcing the upcoming visit of Avarih

Avarih (literally "the Wanderer") was a Baha'i missionary, journalist, author and teacher who spent 18 years as missionary. He was a close companion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who conferred on him the titles of "Raʾīs-al-moballeḡīn" (Chief of Missionaries) and "Avarih."

Avarih would later become a Muslim and an opponent of the Bahá'í Faith. He returned to Tehran and spent the rest of his life as a secondary school teacher. During this period he wrote many works of poetry and prose, including *Kashf al-Hiyal*, a three volume work refuting the Bahá'í Faith.

While he was lauded in early Bahá'í literature, his personage underwent a form of *damnatio memoriae*, with the numerous references made to Avarih in John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* being removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

> *The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. The glory of the All-Glorious rest upon them! Beloved brethren and sisters in `Abdu'l-Bahá!*
>
> *His honor, Jinab-i `Abdu'l-Husayn-i Avarih, fired with the spirit of service and teaching which the passing of our beloved Master has kindled in every heart, is proceeding to Europe and will visit every Bahá'í centre in that great continent, that he may with the aid of the many friends in those regions raise the Call of Ya-Baha'u'l-Abha and stimulate interest in the Cause of God. He is indeed qualified for such an eminent noble task and I am confident that by the Grace of God and with the whole-hearted assistance of the loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he may be enabled to promote far and wide the universal Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.*
>
> *His wide experience and familiarity with the various aspects of the Movement, his profound and extensive knowledge of its history; his association with some of the early believers, the pioneers and martyrs of the Cause will I am sure to appeal to every one of you and will serve to acquaint you still further with the more intimate and tragic side of this remarkable Movement.*
>
> *May his sojourn in your country lend a fresh impetus to the onward march of the Cause in the West and arouse widespread interest in the history as well as the principles of the Bahá'í Movement!*

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith, **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

> ***Fast-Dwindling Band of Covenant-Breakers***
>
> *Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith, **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah, within the cradle of the Faith, North America and Turkey, who demonstrated varying degrees, in the course of over thirty years, of faithlessness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*
>
> *The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being **the most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate** in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.*
>
> *The second, history will recognize as one of the **most perfidious among the kinsmen** of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who, **driven by ungovernable cupidity**, committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.*
>
> *The third will be chiefly remembered by the **pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition** impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.*
>
> *All three, however **blinded by perversity**, could not have failed to perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.*

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled ĀYATĪ, ʿABD-AL-ḤOSAYN...

Comments

January 5. On this date in 1927, Suhayl ‘Alá'í was born. An early pioneer to Samoa, he served on LSAs in Samoa, the U.S. and Australia, on the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific, the NSA of Samoa, as a Counsellor for Australasia, and as the liaison between Malietoa and the UHJ.

Original file: 0393.html (position #162)

January 5. On this date in 1927, Suhayl ‘Alá'í was born. An early pioneer to Samoa, he served on LSAs in Samoa, the United States and Australia, on the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific, the NSA of Samoa, and as a Counsellor for Australasia. When Malietoa Tanumafili II, Head of State of Samoa, became a Bahá'í in 1967, Suhayl served as the liaison between him and the Universal House of Justice.

Suhayl Ahmad ‘Alá'í was born into a Bahá'í family in Tehran on January 5, 1927. His father

was Ni'mat'u'lláh, brother of Shu'á'u'lláh, and his mother was Ghodsieh. His fathers parents were Nazimu'l-Hukama, a Bahá'í who served as physician at the court of the Shah, and Bibi Jan, and his mothers parents were Amín-i-Amín, third Trustee of Huqúqu'lláh, and Masoud Khanum. A prominent cousin was Gloria ‘Alá'í Faizi, daughter of Rahmatu'llah Khan 'Ala'i and wife of Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faizi.

In his youth Suhayl was a member of the Tehran Bahá'í Youth Club, and he later served on several Bahá'í committees related to youth and publications. When he was nineteen his family pioneered to Afghanistan, however they were arrested and sent back to Iran after only nine months due to their religion.

After graduating from High School in May 1947 Suhayl began working in irrigation and water supply for the Ardakani Company until March 1950 when he moved to New Zealand to attend university. He studied sheep and dairy farming at Massey Agricultural College for four years, representing the College in basketball and soccer in addition to completing his Diploma in Agriculture. He also played for the All New Zealand Basketball Team for two years.

In December 1953 he met Lilian Wyss, an Australian Bahá'í briefly visiting New Zealand before pioneering to Samoa, at a Summer School in Auckland. Lilian Wyss became a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Samoa Islands in 1954 and her brother, Frank Wyss, became a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Cocos Islands in 1955. Suhayl ‘Alá'í married Lilian in Fiji in November 1954 and moved to Samoa with her where they had three children. Suhayl's parents, Ni'mat'u'lláh and Ghodsieh, also pioneered to Samoa living there for four years before moving to Hastings, New Zealand, at the suggestion of Shoghi Effendi.

In 1959 Suhayl was elected to the inaugural Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific. After His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, Head of State of Samoa, became a Bahá'í in 1967 Suhayl served as the liason between him and the Universal House of Justice. In 1968 he was appointed as an inaugural Counsellor for Australasia for an indefinite term, and was reappointed in 1980 when the Universal House of Justice announced that Counsellors would serve five year terms. He was appointed for a second five year term in 1985, and was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa in 1993.

Suhayl assisted in the founding of the American Samoa Chamber of Commerce, drafting its constitution, and was active in the United Nations Organization in Samoa. He helped the Faith by assisting in the purchase of the grounds that the House of Worship of Samoa was built on in 1984.

He died on August 14, 1995 and was buried within the grounds of the Samoan House of Worship with his grave being next the grave of Ugo Giachery. Malietoa Tanumafili II attended his funeral and the Universal House of Justice cabled the following after his passing:

> *DEEPLY DISTRESSED NEWS PASSING SUHAYL 'ALA'I' WHO RENDERED EXEMPLARY SERVICES PIONEER SAMOA MORE THAN FOUR DECADES, PLAYED VITAL UNFORGETTABLE ROLE PROPAGATION FAITH CONSOLIDATION INSTITUTIONS ENTIRE PACIFIC REGION, SERVED MEMBER FIRST NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY SOUTH PACIFIC, AND LATER OVER TWO DECADES BOARD COUNSELLORS AUSTRALASIA. RECALL WITH PROFOUND ADMIRATION HIS KINDNESS, LOVE PACIFIC PEOPLES, HIS SACRIFICIAL DEDICATION ADVANCEMENT THEIR INTERESTS, HIS ROLE CONSTRUCTION HOUSE OF WORSHIP SAMOA, HIS INVOLVEMENT WORK CAUSE TO LAST HOURS EARTHLY LIFE.*
>
> *ADVISE HOLDING MEMORIAL SERVICES HOUSE WORSHIP, BAHA'I COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT SAMOA. ALSO REQUESTING NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING HOUSE OF WORSHIP.*
>
> *OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINE PROGRESS HIS LUMINOUS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HIS MOTHER, HIS WIFE, AND FAMILY.*

Comments

January 5. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question concerning the passage in 'Seven Valleys' referring to pre-existence. This in no way presupposes the existence of the individual soul before conception. The term has not been absolutely accurately translated...."

Original file: 0392.html (position #161)

January 5. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question concerning the passage in 'Seven Valleys' referring to pre-existence. This in no way presupposes the existence of the individual soul before conception. The term has not been absolutely accurately translated, and what is meant is that man's soul is the repository of the ancient, divine mysteries of God."

1699. The Souls of the Prophets Are Pre-Existent

"The soul or spirit of the individual comes into being with the conception of his physical body.

"The Prophets, unlike us, are pre-existent. The Soul of Christ existed in the spiritual world before His birth in this world. We cannot imagine what that world is like, so words are inadequate to picture His state of being.

"We cannot know God directly, but only through His Prophets. We can pray to Him, realizing that through His Prophets we know Him, or we can address our prayer in thought to Bahá'u'lláh, not as God, but as the Door to our knowing God.

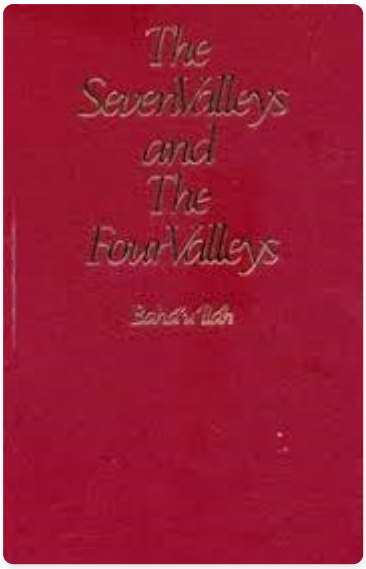
"We find God only through the Intermediary of His Prophet. We see the Perfection of God in His Prophets. Time and space are physical things; God the Creator is not in a 'place' as we conceive of place in physical terms. God is the Infinite Essence, the Creator. We cannot picture Him or His state; if we did, we would be His equals, not His Creatures. God is never flesh, but mirrored in the attributes of His Prophets, we see His Divine characteristics and perfections.

"Shoghi Effendi advises you to study 'Some Answered Questions' and the 'Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh' which help you to grasp these questions."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 9, 1947)

"Regarding your question concerning the passage in 'Seven Valleys' referring to pre-existence. This in no way presupposes the existence of the individual soul before conception. The term has not been absolutely accurately translated, and what is meant is that man's soul is the repository of the ancient, Divine mysteries of God."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 5, 1948)



Comments

January 6. On this date in 1932, Catherine Heward Huxtable, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Gulf Islands and pioneer to Regina, Saskatchewan and St. Helena, was born.

January 6. On this date in 1932, Catherine Heward Huxtable, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for the Gulf Islands and pioneer to Regina, Saskatchewan and St. Helena, was born.

Catherine Huxtable was born on January 6, 1932 at Charlwood House, Charlwood, Surrey, England, to Lt. Col. Stephen A. Heward and Mrs. Helen (Bury) Heward. Upon her family's return to Canada she entered Havergal College at the age of seven. Following an almost fatal attack of scarlet fever when she was ten years old, it was discovered that she suffered from muscular dystrophy of a rare type which indicated a rapid decline and a greatly shortened life span which would probably not reach twenty years. She was to be confined to a wheelchair for half her life. At sixteen her worsening condition made it impossible to continue formal schooling. Despite her physical limitations and waning strength Catherine developed into a self-reliant young woman of diversified interests. She attracted to her a widening circle of friends who accompanied her to concerts, ballets, theaters, art galleries, and lectures. Se became a gifted writer and an accomplished artist in needlepoint. In 1951 she and Clifford Huxtable embraced the Bahá’í faith. In 1955 they were married.

Catherine served on the Spiritual Assembly of Toronto with dedication and became an extremely effective and informed speaker. She had an unusual capacity for sharing the

insights gathered from her intensive study of the Teachings. The intimate "fireside" meetings in her home with Catherine presiding as gracious hostess were a source of confirmation to many; cynicism, doubt and the qualified acceptance of the power of God receded in her presence, so marvelously did she exemplify the Message she presented.

A friend records: "The overpowering combination of Cathy's serenity and saintliness of spirit, her noble and radiance of character, and the sheer beauty of her physical person - a beauty at one time curiously both regal and winsome - served to almost blind one to her great humanness. Only after being with her did one reflect: she is a truly splendid human being, total and balanced and genuine. She lived to an unusual degree in a condition of consciousness o the presence of god, equally committed to the victory of the spirit and to the joy of a full human life. Perhaps this balance was the source of her power and tranquility. She seemed always to be simultaneously static and meditative, engaged in some higher communion, and soaring in an authoritative, graceful motion that the eye could hardly trace. Wherever she went she was described as a saint, a heroine and a true Bahá'í. She was perhaps never more saintly then when withstanding our fusty, needless solicitousness, the limitations we sought to impose on her Bahá'í service, our unconscious projection on her of both our hidden doubts about the assistance promised in the Cause and our desire to see fulfilled in her existence our own deepest spiritual aspirations; nor was she more heroic then when accosted by our need for vindication of the power of the Faith to raise a saint in our midst; nor more a true Bahá'í then when yielding to our efforts to come to her assistance with an empty cup, only to withdraw from her strengthened, renewed and with cup overflowing.

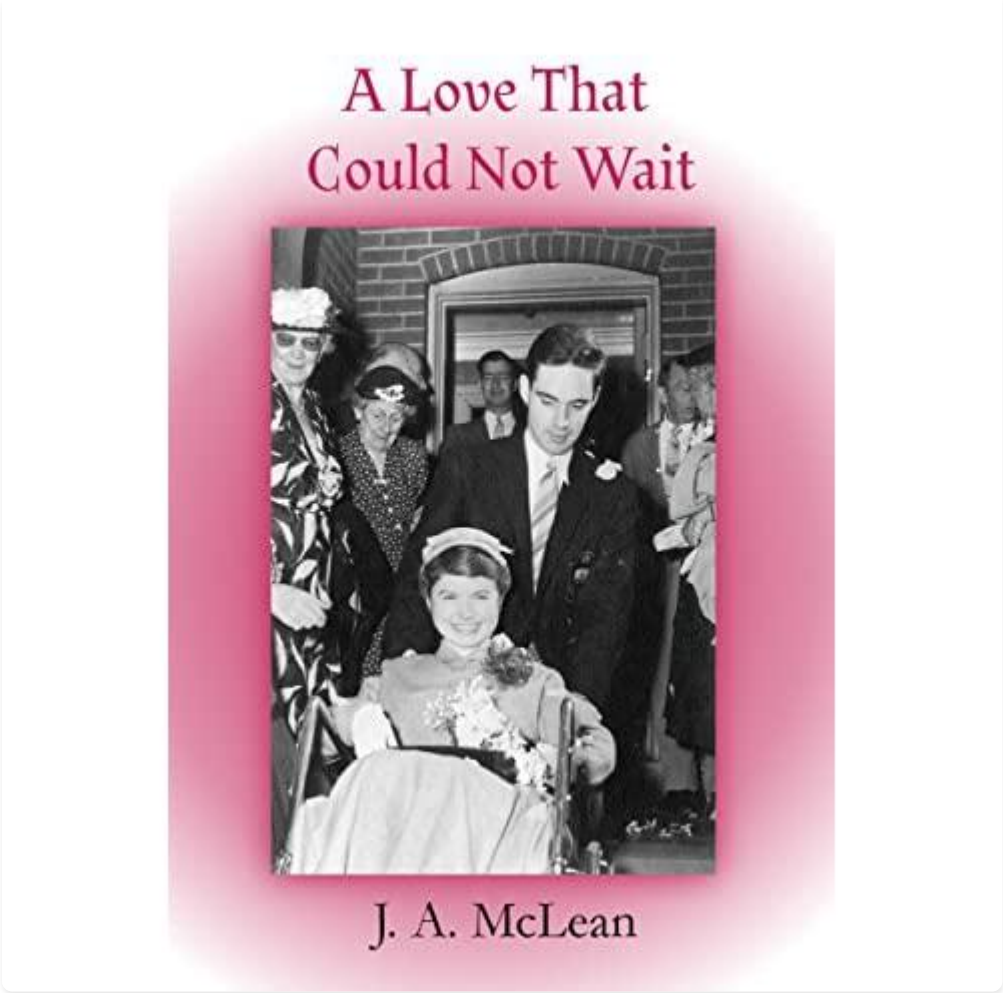
"One cannot imagine the countless subtle hurts and humiliations that arose from her physical condition nor measure the will she applied to overcoming them. Once I found her weeping in a brief and rare surrender to self-pity and rejection. her child had run to her for comfort and brushing the cold steel of her chair had turned away baffled and accepted solace from the housekeeper. Catherine asked for five minutes in which to pray and regain her composure, then invited me to introduce the friend I had brought to meet her. My companion, a cynical pragmatic businessman emerged from his meeting with Catherine with an altered attitude, a confirming experience which led him into the Faith. 'What an incredible power that woman has!' he commented. 'She tells me that there is a God, and I believe her. Furthermore I suspect that Catherine Huxtable must be one of God's favorite teddy bears!'"

The sensitive observer noting Catherine's special love for the pioneers and her frequent letters to those serving in distant areas would have known that inevitably she would

pioneer. In response to the death of Shoghi Effendi, the Huxtables pioneered to Regina, Saskatchewan, to assist in rebuilding the Spiritual Assembly in 1957. That task successfully accomplished, the Huxtables founded the first Spiritual Assembly in the Gulf Islands, a virgin territory of the Ten Year Crusade, for which they became Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. It was there that they had their son, Gavin.

When the call for pioneers in the Nine Year Plan was raised in 1965, the Huxtables volunteered to settle in St. Helena, final prison and resting place of Napoleon Bonaparte. Catherine confided to a friend on the eve of her departure for Africa: "I don't aspire to be a saint; I would rather be one of God's teddybears. I am really no different from anyone else. It is just that I know I shall have less time then others; I cannot be like the unwary bird Bahá'u'lláh speaks of in *The Hidden Words*. Only by centering myself in the Covenant of God can my life or death have any significance. If I have a private prayer, it's this: Let my life and death count in the Faith!"

On October 25, 1967, just nineteen months after arriving at St. Helena, Catherine died. "The end came suddenly after only one day of discomfort," Clifford wrote. "Her last words were an earnest but not anguished payer, 'I want to die.'"



Comments

January 6. On this date in 1987, the UHJ wrote "Concerning the question as to how the term "Persian believer" should be defined ...In cases where children born to such parents are brought up in the Persian tradition, speak Persian, and are thoroughly conversant with the laws of the Kitábi-Aqdas...

Original file: 0390.html (position #159)

January 6. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Concerning the question as to how the term "Persian believer" should be defined in applying this law, you should be guided as follows. The law applies to Persian believers wherever they have established residence after leaving Iran. In cases where children born to such parents are brought up in the Persian tradition, speak Persian, and are thoroughly conversant with the laws of the Kitábi-Aqdas, they will obviously feel an obligation, and should be assisted, to observe this law as circumstances permit."

Concerning the question as to how the term "Persian believer" should be defined in applying this law, you should be guided as follows. The law applies to Persian believers wherever they have established residence after leaving Iran. In cases where children born to such parents are brought up in the Persian tradition, speak Persian, and are thoroughly conversant with the laws of the Kitábi-Aqdas, they will obviously feel an obligation, and should be assisted, to observe this law as circumstances permit.

Letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated January 6, 1987, to a National Spiritual Assembly (Compilations, NSA USA - Developing Distinctive Baha'i Communities)

Comments

January 6. On this date in 1957, Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím sent a cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran, advising pioneers to "scatter to make new centers" and "not to gather in one place but to scatter in different places."

Original file: 0389.html (position #158)

January 6. On this date in 1957, Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím sent a cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran, advising pioneers to "scatter to make new centers" and "not to gather in one place but to scatter in different places."

> *To the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran*
>
> *Letter of January 6, 1957*
>
> *Regarding pioneers going to Japan, Brazil ... and other places, the beloved Guardian states that they must not gather in one place but scatter to make new centers, e.g., Mr. Assassi and his wife, and Mr. Labib who travelled to Japan must not stay in Tokyo but should go to places where there are no Bahá'ís, or very few Bahá'ís to make new centers. Furthermore (he) says that the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran must write to all pioneers that have left Iran for other parts of the world and instruct them not to gather in one place but to scatter in different*

> *places. He says that the matter stated above is very important... (translated from the original Persian)*
>
> *(signed by Dr. Hakim)*

Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím was born in 1888 in Iran to a prominent Bahá'í family. His paternal grandfather, Hakím Masíh, was the court physician for the Qajar dynasty and the first Jewish convert to the Bahá'í Faith. When Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím's father, Hakim Sulayman, died, Lutfu'llah was placed under the care of his elder brother, Dr. Arastu Khan.

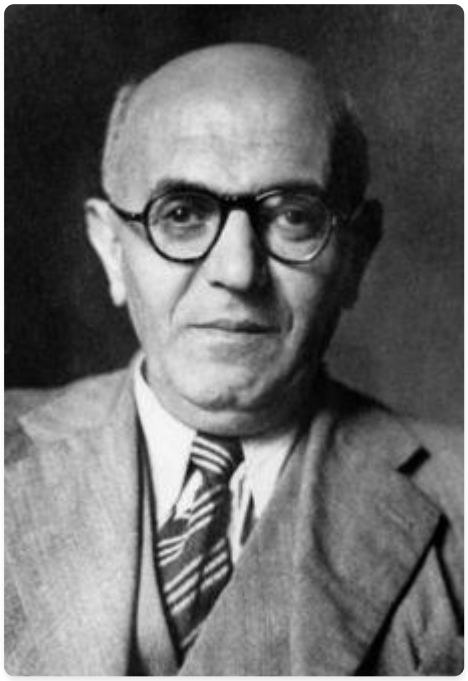
On September 4, 1911, while studying physiotherapy in London, Ḥakím was among the Bahá'ís who greeted 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his visit to Great Britain. During this period, Hakím was close friends with John Esslemont, who would go on to become a Bahá'í in 1915. 'Abdu'l-Bahá would dedicate several Tablets to Ḥakím and eventually summoned him to Haifa to serve there. In 1920, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent Ḥakím to England with Shoghi Effendi to accompany him on his journey. By the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death on November 28, 1921, Ḥakím had returned to Haifa. In 1924 he went to Iran to work in Susan Moody's clinic.

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi called him to Haifa and appointed him to the International Bahá'í Council. In 1963 Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím was elected as an inaugural member of the Universal House of Justice, on which body he served until asking to retire in 1967 due to ill health. He died on August 10, 1968.

On his death, the Universal House of Justice sent the following cablegram:

> *To all National Spiritual AssembliesDear Bahá'í Friends,We share with you the following cable which we have just sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia:GRIEVE ANNOUNCE PASSING LUṬFU'LLÁH ḤAKÍM DEDICATED SERVANT CAUSE GOD. SPECIAL MISSIONS ENTRUSTED HIM FULL CONFIDENCE REPOSED IN HIM BY MASTER AND GUARDIAN HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH EARLY DISTINGUISHED BELIEVERS EAST WEST INCLUDING HIS COLLABORATION ESSLEMONT HIS SERVICES PERSIA BRITISH ISLES HOLY LAND HIS MEMBERSHIP APPOINTED AND ELECTED INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL HIS ELECTION UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED IMMORTAL ANNALS FAITH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. INFORM BELIEVERS HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETINGS ALL CENTERS. CONVEY ALL MEMBERS HIS FAMILY EXPRESSIONS LOVING*

> *SYMPATHY ASSURANCE PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.In view of Dr Ḥakím's long and devoted record of services to the Faith other National Spiritual Assemblies are requested to hold memorial gatherings. Special commemorative services should also be held in the four Mother Temples of the Bahá'í World.With loving Bahá'í greetings,THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE*



Comments

January 6. On this date in 2016, Maliheh Afnan, a great-granddaughter of Bahá'u'lláh and a renowned artist, died in London at the age of 80.

Original file: 0388.html (position #157)

January 6. On this date in 2016, Maliheh Afnan, a great-granddaughter of Bahá'u'lláh and a renowned artist, died in London at the age of 81. She is featured in this Rose Issa Projects video.

The daughter of Persian parents, Maliheh Afnan was born in Haifa on March 24, 1935, to a prominent Bahá'í lineage. Her father was Nayyir Afnan, son of Siyyid Ali Afnan and grandson of Hajjí Mírzá Siyyid Hasan, the brother-in-law of the Báb. Nayyir Afnan's mother was Furughiyyih Khanum, the daughter of Bahá'u'lláh from his third marriage to Gawhar Khanum. Her mother was Ruhangiz Afnan. Her maternal grandparents were Mírzá Hádí Shírází and Ḍíyá'íyyih Khánum, the eldest daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Munirih Khánum. Ruhangiz, having married an individual who had been declared a Covenant-breaker by 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in turn declared a Covenant-breaker by her brother, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian&oldid=745828715) of the Bahá'í Faith.

Maliheh Afnan moved to Beirut with her family in 1949. She received a BA from the American University of Beirut and a MA in Fine Arts from the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design in Washington, D.C.. Afnan lived in Kuwait from 1963 to 1966, in Beirut from 1966 to 1974 and in Paris from 1974 until 1997, when she moved to London.

Afnan's work has been shown primarily in France and in London. Her first solo show, in a Basel gallery in 1971, was organized by the American artist Mark Tobey. Her work is

included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the British Museum in London, the Written Art Collection in Germany, the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and the BAII Bank Collection in Paris.

She died in London at the age of 80 on January 6, 2016.

Comments

January 6. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote an American local assembly "I feel that sooner or later the secret of this unbounded love must appear and that great continent so near and dear to His heart, must soon unfold itself entirely to the glory of His Revelation."

January 6. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote an American local assembly "I feel that sooner or later the secret of this unbounded love must appear and that great continent so near and dear to His heart, must soon unfold itself entirely to the glory of His Revelation."

Original file: 0387.html (position #156)

From Chapter 14 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "Guiding Lines"...

> *"Whenever", Shoghi Effendi wrote to one of America's local Assemblies on 6*

> *January 1923 - a year after the reading of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá - "I recall the messages of love, of confidence and of hope our Beloved has expressed in such glowing terms in His innumerable Tablets to the loved ones in America, I feel that sooner or later the secret of this unbounded love must appear and that great continent so near and dear to His heart, must soon unfold itself entirely to the glory of His Revelation."*

Comments

January 7. On this date in 1979, Denis MacEoin wrote a "Letter on Bahá'í attitudes towards politics and scholarship" published in the Los Angeles Bahá'í Study Class Newsletter, volume 34, pages 4-12.

Original file: 0386.html (position #155)

January 7. On this date in 1979, Denis MacEoin wrote a "Letter on Bahá'í attitudes towards politics and scholarship" published in the *Los Angeles Bahá'í Study Class Newsletter*, 34, pages 4-12, noting "the Baha'i faith as it stands today is in very real danger of becoming irrelevant to the problems faced by people in the world outside — if it has not already become so."

> *Cambridge, England*
>
> *7 January 1979*
>
> *Dear Friends,*
>
> *I have read your latest (November 1978) Newsletter [online here] with more than usual interest and sympathy, and feel that I would like to add a few words in its wake. I shall not try to expand on Tony's account of our seminar here in*

Cambridge, much as it is tempting to do so — from the report in your Newsletter, he seems to have done a thorough job of leading you through a very complicated set of issues raised there. The full report, as stated, is available, and dwells more thoroughly on the major topics mentioned by Tony.

I was most interested by the discussion reported on pages 3-4 of your summary. As Tony knows, this is a topic about which I personally feel very strongly. In the simplest terms, ***I fear that the Baha'i faith as it stands today is in very real danger of becoming irrelevant to the problems faced by people in the world outside — if it has not already become so.*** *As the faith has become more and more organised, with, as you so rightly point out, a growing obsession with figures, numbers, and statistics for their own sake, and a tendency to evaluate the significance of the faith as a religion in terms which have no bearing whatever on this (such as how many languages literature has been 'translated' into), we seem to have become more and more introspective and withdrawn, exclusive rather than all-embracing. As a result, most Baha'is appear to be completely ignorant of the issues facing modern man. And, what is worse, they don't care — if you suggest that they read, say,* Marcuse*, most Baha'is react with a disdainful, slightly superior shrug: 'we have the writings, we don't need to waste our time on the book of false physicians'.* ***As one friend, for some time an NSA secretary (not in the U.K.) put it to me: 'nothing worth reading has ever been written in the twentieth century'.*** *In fact, it is not even a case of whether people are up on Patti Smith or Malcolm Bradbury's latest novel, they have yet to read* Marx *or early* Koestler*! Instead, the community is locked into an obsession with issues which were vital before or just after the first World War and, what is worse, are a lot less forthright now about issues such as war, poverty, race, and so forth that they were then.* ***To speak about race integration in the States in the 20's was genuinely progressive. Last year at a Youth Conference in the U.K. (facing a major race problem and the threat of growing fascism — the country's fascist party is the fourth largest in the country), an NSA member told the youth that we should have nothing to do with the issue of race, since it is political!***

In recent years, I feel, the situation has become even more serious (in this country at least). Whereas about ten or more years ago, the Baha'i community tried (in however outdated a fashion) to be involved with society around it, we now seem to think about and talk about and be told about nothing but goals, organization, conferences, and other purely internal matters — very few of them even of a

spiritual or genuinely religious nature. Your phrase 'shopping list' goals sums up very well indeed the utterly meaningless hole we seem to have dug ourselves into. ***The Five Year Plan in this country has been a mindless race after numbers, constant reshuffles, juggling with statistics, bombastic sermons which have passed beyond banality to the depths of uninspiration.*** *Success is judged in the most material and sterile terms, important long-term tasks of the community have been shelved in order to win insignificant short-term goals, and above all, everybody knows that we will 'win' the Plan, whatever the real result.* ***Beneath the surface, fairly large numbers of people are withdrawing, even larger numbers have become inactive, leaving things in the hands of thick-skinned administrators whom we could as well hire from an employment agency, the teaching work becomes more and more geared to attracting the less spiritual, and the circle becomes a spiral. Worst of all, I fear, is that the Baha'is are gradually gaining a reputation for hypocrisy and self-interestedness.*** *To give one example, several years ago, when the troubles began in Northern Ireland, a few Baha'is gave help for some time at a refugee centre, along with other groups. Despite the fact that the Quakers, who ran the centre, had asked for no publicity, the Baha'is were the only group to seek and obtain newspaper publicity for their work with refugees. Since then, the Baha'is as a group, in Northern Ireland have done nothing to help anybody, have never even condemned the violence publicly, and have held numerous conferences and teaching activities which even the believers are beginning to avoid. To give just one other example: the Public Relations Officer of the U.K. Baha'i Community recently told a Mayor, in the course of a tree-planting (!) ceremony (which seems to be the most radical activity we engage in) that 'Baha'is the world over were working hard in thousands of centres to help improve the environment and the quality of life of all the inhabitants of the earth. They were also involved in efforts to resist the spread of deserts which themselves resulted from the wholesale destruction of trees. At world level, through United Nations agencies, the Baha'i International Community was constantly involved in this work of improving the environment'. As any Baha'i should know, this is, quite simply, dishonest and unethical — but this type of exaggeration and distortion, coupled with the fact that we only ever become involved in any activity where there is a chance of publicity for ourselves, will, I feel, soon be regarded as the chief characteristic of the Baha'is, if it is not already in many quarters.*

To a large degree, this lack of involvement in live issues is linked to the fact that

many contemporary social issues (such as those mentioned in your Newsletter, and others, such as unemployment, prisoners of conscience, the union) have, or appear to have, a high political content. Since Baha'is have failed to define what they mean by politics in the context of 'non-involvement in politics', they are now taking the easiest course, which is to avoid anything which may be remotely political — which means, in effect, just about any relevant social or humanitarian issue today. By dealing with 'safe' issues (such as tree-planting) and 'pie in the sky' policies, we manage to preserve intact our integrity on the principle of non-involvement in politics, even if to do so we have to sacrifice other basic principles regarding war, racialism, sex inequality, tyranny, freedom of conscience, economic adjustment, and so on. ***The non-involvement tag is our get-out pass from just about everything, and the more we use it the more out of touch and irrelevant we become.***

The simple fact is that, in a real sense, the Baha'i faith is one of the most political movements around. After all, principles such as the ending of absolute national sovereignty, world government, universal currency, universal language, sex equality, racial integration, disarmament, world tribunal, anti-communism, retention of constitutional monarchism, the abolition of non-Baha'i religious legal systems (such as the Islamic sharia), the retention of a class system, the abolition of tariffs, international police force, and so on are among the hottest political issues around. Do we just dismember the faith, trimming off any principle or concept that seems likely to offend the political susceptibilities of someone or some government somewhere, or do we accept that we have these principles and that we intend to establish them, destroying, in the process, any other system or ideology which seeks to oppose them? We should also bear in mind that the apparently non-political activity of just teaching the faith is highly political. Quite apart from problems such as teaching race unity, say, South Africa, it is obvious that they will be able to (in theory, at least) to exert pressure on society as a whole, particularly in a democracy. It is hardly enough to say that we are 'non-political' — after all, we do plan to bring into being a series of Baha'i states and, in the end, a Baha'i world — no less extreme than the aim of every Marxist. And, in the same way that not everyone jumps with joy at the thought of his country becoming Marxist, so we can hardly expect that there will be universal rejoicing at the news that the Baha'i faith is becoming a threat to the established political system. We may say that the old order is destroying itself and that we intend merely to step in when it collapses, not to actively work for its destruction — but take another look at

Marx's theory of the dialectic of history: capitalism destroys itself in order to give way to communism. Instead of engaging in violent revolution to speed up the process, we 'teach the faith'.

Tragically, however, in order to pretend not to be concerned with politics, we have more and more adopted a line of expediency in our relationship with the outside world. This has reached such proportions that Baha'is cannot officially be involved with a totally non-aligned organisation such as Amnesty International because it might give rise to a false impression. As a result, we are totally uninvolved with one of the major evils of this century — political and religious oppression coupled with wrongful imprisonment, torture, and execution on the most appalling scale — despite the numerous statements in the writings about opposing injustice and tyranny. ***Baha'u'llah wrote directly to rulers to reprimand them for their brutality and repression, while we today pose for pictures with Pinochet and Amin (thank God for your reference to the Pinochet photograph — I thought I was the only person who had noticed it). Yet, the moment anyone lifts a finger to harm Baha'is, in however a minor way, there is a universal outcry and we appeal for aid to the UN and suchlike.*** *The Iranian regime has been massacring its people for decades, and thousands are dying in the present troubles, but the only thing to excite protests from the Baha'is has been the threat of violence to themselves. No mention is made of the fact that Jews or Christians have been threatened or attacked.* ***The fact is that we seem to judge the justice of a regime according to how well it treats the Baha'is. An unjust regime treating us well is tolerated or even extolled, while a popular regime which deprives us of certain freedoms (perhaps along with other religious groups) is regarded as evil.*** *No one has asked, for example, what the people of Iran, as a whole, want, but what would ensure the safety of the Baha'is there; so if thousands of Shi'i Muslims are killed, who cares? — they deserve it anyway for having persecuted the Baha'is.*

As you say in your Newsletter, the Shah's 'continued reign seems to be the only hope the Baha'is have of avoiding full-scale persecution'. There was a time when this need not have been so. The fact is that the Baha'is of Iran have done nothing to help their fellow countryman inside or outside of the country. They have been content to benefit economically and in other ways from the present regime and have gained a real reputation as an inward-looking community which would sacrifice the country for its own ends. Baha'is actually hate the Muslims and try to

have as little as possible to do with them. And they seem unable to understand the impression they create. Many years ago, when some Baha'i villages in Adhirbayjan [Azerbaijan] were suffering from a boycott, a well-known and ... [last line cut off].

No one could understand when I pointed out that this would only worsen the situation in the long term. Not only this, but there is a serious level of class distinction between the Baha'is in Iran, a fact which has not escaped the rest of the population, especially the intellectuals. I have lived in a reasonably wealthy Baha'i home in Tihran while, in a room underneath, another Baha'i family with two children lived on bread and yogurt with no furniture — and this is not abnormal. There are many Baha'i meetings in Iran at which a 400 dollar suit would be more of a passport than Baha'i credentials. I don't wish to be mistaken — some of the most wonderful Baha'is in the world (and some of my dearest friends) live in Iran but the community is known for its wealth, inequality, and exclusiveness.

In general, a deradicalization of the Baha'i faith has occurred over recent years. Like many other originally radical religious movements, the faith has moved from a position of active hostility to the existing order (under the Babis) to non-violent condemnation of abuses in politics and religion, to a passive acceptance of the establishment and, of late, a positive attempt to become integrated with the establishment. This latter development is typical of an originally sectarian movement which becomes a denomination, and is generally a consequence (as has taken place in Iran) of second and third generation prosperity, the removal of charisma, and the growth of organisational elements. Baha'is in many places now show considerable eagerness to become respectable. Being a member of a quaint, exotic religious movement is usually acceptable in the first generation, but it can become an embarrassment to later believers who are successful in society and derive benefits from it. We have now reached that stage in several places. To give one example: almost two years ago, the LSA here suggested to the NSA that every LSA in this country should have 5 pounds (about 9 dollars) to the Venezuela earthquake disaster fund; the suggestion was dismissed on the grounds that we were not concerned with such matters. Not long after, Assemblies and groups throughout the country were asked to give their assistance to government bodies organising the Queen's Jubilee Fund, collecting money for British youth clubs and organisations. The reason? It was a 'door to proclamation'. A pamphlet was even produced and widely distributed by one Assembly detailing the links of the Baha'i faith with the British monarchy and our support for it. When our Assembly pointed out to the NSA that this kind of activity could be construed in many quarters as

political, and that, in areas such as Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (where there is strong anti-monarchical feeling), the faith would be identified with political views of wide unpopularity, the reply made by the secretary was simply that he could not understand the point we were making. Nor could he understand our making a distinction between loyalty to one's government and active support for the establishment.

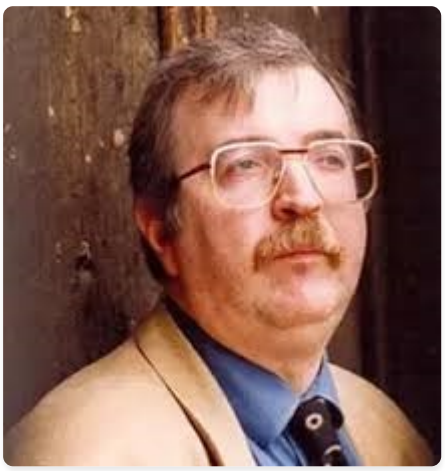
It is a tragic situation when, as seems to be happening more and more often, Baha'is show themselves to be proud of the fact that they have gained some form of recognition from the old order. *Something subtle is wrong, I think, when, for example, such publicity is given to the fact that Baha'is have been asked to join in an inter-faith service in Westminster Abbey. We now think it a wonderful thing when the very churches which we used to describe as defunct and despiritualised patronize us in this way, and do what we can to ingratiate ourselves with clerics, bishops, and 'respectable' religious organisations. It seems curious too that we appear to be increasingly favourable to establishment, right-wing, and conservative religions and government bodies; we have very little do to with groups which advocate social change, such as Amnesty, race harmony bodies, sex discrimination groups, anti-war movements, and so on, and more and more with bodies advocating stability, order, law, and respectable social behaviour. It is not surprising that Pinochet and others show such favour towards the Baha'is — we are the ideal religious fringe group for repressive regimes: the offer of outward radicalism with absolute acceptance of the status quo in return for toleration. In Marcusan terms, we are an acceptable alternative to genuine radicalism which may threaten to actually change society. And, as you so well point out in your Newsletter and I have shown above, we are politically naive.*

Here again, we are faced with a vicious circle. The faith, as it stands, is predominantly middle-class and conservative (in the West, at least): students, radicals, the ... [last line cut off] ... as presented and the community as met unattractive and irrelevant to their concerns (to the extent that anybody actually tries to teach such socially unacceptable people), and so the only converts are won among middle class quasi-liberals — and the circle repeats itself. The faith seems to be going through a severe crisis — without being aware of it. I have personally little doubt that, if a trenchant radicalisation of the community does not take place within the next decade or sooner, it will stagnate and collapse inwards. Exaggerated news items of mass teaching successes and 'unprecedented'

campaigns in some areas should not make us lose sight of the fact that, in the longer established communities, there is a growing disillusion, retrogression, routinization, and apathy — highlighted by the increasingly frenetic pronouncements that 'things have never been better'. The administration, particularly, the mobile, distant, and woolly appointed side (which is rapidly acquiring many of the characteristics of a clergy), seems to have lost all touch with the mass of believers. ***At meetings and conferences in this country, it is increasingly rare to find someone not an NSA member, Board Member, Counsellor, or, recently, Assistant, to speak formally — and most of the best-informed and stimulating people belong to none of these bodies. As you write, '...now, more often than not, the body of the believers are expected to only carry out policies, rather than help form them.'***

To find a solution to any problems I have outlined above is hardly an easy task. But it is an urgent one — most of all because it is little recognised and even less admitted. Clearly fresh Baha'i scholarship in all fields, with considerably greater freedom of expression than is at present permitted, is a priority, as we discussed at Cambridge. But it is not only scholarship, but any fresh thinking, whether scholarly or not, which is being suppressed by those who are convinced that their version of the Baha'i faith is the one and only true version and anything else is heresy. If greater latitude in such matters is not very soon permitted, ***I fear that the faith will lose at increasing speed its most intelligent, sensitive, and creative believers — and we will be in the hands of civil servants and clergy.*** *The Baha'is must make the decision to allow the faith to develop naturally as a universal religion or to prematurely ossify as an establishment 'church'. New ideas are needed — and new actions. It is rubbish to say that, in view of our size and poverty we cannot do anything to help the sufferings of mankind. Single individuals, poor, humble, and dedicated, have, before this, become major forces for good among mankind. The Baha'i community could become a great force for the betterment of the world if, instead of planting trees and talking about the wonderful society of centuries hence, we were to take positive action on the principles for which we claim to stand, if we were to become known as a people for whom expediency and compromise were anathema, if we were to fight, in however a small and restricted an arena, against injustice, tyranny, oppression, corruption, exploitation, and other social evils — without ever taking sides. Perhaps we would be persecuted in some places, perhaps a few Baha'is would die, perhaps we would be misunderstood by some people — but the faith has always*

> *been richer for that. It has been well said that to sit on the fence is to take sides — is it not time to we came off the fence and showed our true commitment to the cause of good and humanity?*
>
> *With warmest wishes,*
>
> *Denis MacEoin*



Comments

January 7. On this date in 1913, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to the Esperanto Society in Edinburgh stating "... Esperanto ... We have commanded all the Bahá’ís in the Orient to study this language...for it will hasten the coming of that Day, that Millennial Day, foretold by prophets and seers..."

Original file: 0385.html (position #154)

January 7. On this date in 1913, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to the Esperanto Society in Edinburgh stating "Now, praise be to God, that language has been created -- Esperanto. This is one of the special gifts of this luminous century, one of the most remarkable achievements of this great age...Now let us thank the Lord because the Esperanto language has been created. We have commanded all the Bahá’ís in the Orient to study this language very carefully, and ere long it will spread all over the East. I pray you, Esperantists and non-Esperantists, to work with zeal for the spread of this language, for it will hasten the coming of that Day, that Millennial Day, foretold by prophets and seers, that Day when, it is said, the wolf and the lamb shall drink from the same fountain, the lion and the deer shall

feed in the same pasture. The meaning of this holy word is that hostile races, warring nations, differing religions, shall become united in the spirit of love...I repeat, the most important thing in the world is the realization of an auxiliary international language. Oneness of language will transform mankind into one world, remove religious misunderstandings, and unite East and West in the spirit of brotherhood and love. Oneness of language will change this world from many families into one family. This auxiliary international language will gather the nations under one standard, as if the five continents of the world had become one, for then mutual interchange of thought will be possible for all. It will remove ignorance and superstition, since each child of whatever race or nation can pursue his studies in science and art, needing but two languages -- his own and the International...It is our hope then, that the language Esperanto will soon spread throughout the whole world, in order that all people may be able to live together in the spirit of friendship and love."

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

664. Every movement which promotes unity and harmony in the world is good, and everything which creates discord and discontent is bad. This is a century of illumination, surpassing all others in its many discoveries, its great inventions, and its vast and varied undertakings. But the greatest achievement of the age in conferring profit and pleasure on mankind is the creation of an auxiliary language for all. Oneness of language engenders peace and harmony. Oneness of language creates oneness of heart. It sweeps away all misunderstandings among peoples. It establishes harmony among the children of men. It gives to the human intellect a broader conception, a more commanding point of view.

Today the greatest need of humanity is to understand and to be understood. With the help of the International Language, every individual member of a community can learn of world happenings and become in touch with the ethical and scientific discoveries of the age. The auxiliary international language gives to us the key -- the key of keys -- which unlocks the secret of the past. By its aid every nation henceforth will be able easily and without difficulty to work out its own scientific discoveries.

It is a well-known fact that the Oriental student coming to the West, in his efforts to acquaint himself with the discoveries and achievements of Western civilization, must spend precious years of his life in acquiring the language of the land to which

he comes before he can turn to the study of the special science in which he is interested. For example, let us suppose that a youth from India, Persia, Turkestan or Arabia comes to this country to study medicine. He must first struggle with the English language for four years, to the exclusion of all else, before he can even begin the study of medicine. Whereas, if the auxiliary international language were taught in all the schools during his childhood, he would learn the language in his own country, and afterwards, wherever he wished to go, he could easily pursue his specialty without loss of some of the best years of his life.

Today if one wishes to travel abroad, even though possessed of several languages, he is likely to be seriously handicapped because he does not know the particular language of some one people. ***I have studied Oriental languages profoundly and know the Arabic better than the Arabians themselves.*** *I have studied Turkish and Persian in my native land, besides other languages of the East; nevertheless, when I visited the West I had to take an interpreter with me quite as if I knew no language. Now if the International Language were generally spoken, that and the Persian language would be sufficient for me in every country of the world.*

Only think how the International Language will facilitate intercommunication among all the nations of the earth. Half of our lives are consumed in acquiring a knowledge of languages, for in this enlightened age every man who hopes to travel in Asia and Africa and Europe must learn several languages, in order that he may converse with their peoples. But no sooner does he acquire one language than another is needed. Thus one's whole life may be passed in acquiring those languages which are a hindrance to international communication. The International Language frees humanity from all these problems.

In a word, to understand and be understood, there must be an international medium. The teacher and the pupil must know each other's language, in order that the teacher must impart his knowledge and the pupil receive it. In all the world there is nothing more important than to be understood by your fellowmen, for upon this depends the progress of civilization itself. To acquire a knowledge of the arts and sciences one must know how to speak, to understand and at the same time to make himself understood, and this matter of understanding and being understood depends on language. Once establish this auxiliary language and all will be enabled to understand each other.

I recall an incident which occurred in Baghdád. There were two friends who knew

not each other's language. One fell ill, the other visited him, but not being able to express his sympathy in words, resorted to gesture, as if to say, "How do you feel?" with another sign the sick replied, "I shall soon be dead," and his visitor, believing the gesture to indicate that he was getting better, said, "God be praised!"

From such illustrations you will admit that the greatest thing in the world is to be able to make yourself understood by your friends and to understand them, and that there is no greater handicap in the world than not to be able to communicate your thoughts to others. But with the auxiliary language all these difficulties disappear.

665. ***Now, praise be to God, that language has been created -- Esperanto. This is one of the special gifts of this luminous century, one of the most remarkable achievements of this great age.***

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh many years ago wrote a book called "The Most Holy Book," one of the fundamental principles of which is the necessity of creating an International Language, and He explains the great good and advantage that will result from its use.

Now let us thank the Lord because the Esperanto language has been created. We have commanded all the Bahá'ís in the Orient to study this language very carefully, and ere long it will spread all over the East. I pray you, Esperantists and non-Esperantists, to work with zeal for the spread of this language, for it will hasten the coming of that Day, that Millennial Day, foretold by prophets and seers, that Day when, it is said, the wolf and the lamb shall drink from the same fountain, the lion and the deer shall feed in the same pasture. The meaning of this holy word is that hostile races, warring nations, differing religions, shall become united in the spirit of love.

I repeat, the most important thing in the world is the realization of an auxiliary international language. Oneness of language will transform mankind into one world, remove religious misunderstandings, and unite East and West in the spirit of brotherhood and love. Oneness of language will change this world from many families into one family. This auxiliary international language will gather the nations under one standard, as if the five continents of the world had become one, for then mutual interchange of thought will be possible for all. It will

> ***remove ignorance and superstition, since each child of whatever race or nation can pursue his studies in science and art, needing but two languages -- his own and the International.*** *The world of matter will become the expression of the world of mind. Then discoveries will be revealed, inventions will multiply, the sciences advance by leaps and bounds, the scientific culture of the earth will develop along broader lines. Then the nations will be enabled to utilize the latest and best thought, because expressed in the International Language.*
>
> *If the International Language becomes a factor of the future, all the Eastern peoples will be enabled to acquaint themselves with the sciences of the West, and in turn the Western nations will become familiar with the thoughts and ideas of the East, thereby improving the condition of both. In short, with the establishment of this International Language the world of mankind will become another world and extraordinary will be the progress.* ***It is our hope then, that the language Esperanto will soon spread throughout the whole world, in order that all people may be able to live together in the spirit of friendship and love.***
>
> *Esperanto Society*
>
> *Edinburgh*
>
> *January 7, 1913.*

In the past, Bahá'ís were more active in learning and encouraging the learning of Esperanto, and the links between Esperanto and the Bahá'í Faith are numerous. Ehsan Yarshater, the ex-Bahá'í founder and editor of Encyclopedia Iranica, notes how as a child in Iran he learned and taught Esperanto and that when his mother was visiting Haifa he wrote her a letter in Persian as well as Esperanto. L.L. Zamenhof's daughter, Lidia Zamenhof was a convert to the Bahá'í Faith. At the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Agnes Baldwin Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used it to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences in Japan.

Due to the failure of Esperanto to gain significant traction, however, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements have been backtracked, such that Shoghi Effendi said

> *Regarding the subject of Esperanto; it should be made clear to the believers that* ***while the teaching of that language has been repeatedly encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is no reference either from Him or from Bahá'u'lláh that can make us believe that it will necessarily develop into the international auxiliary language of the future.*** *Bahá'u'lláh has specified in His Writings that such a language will either have to be chosen from one of the existing languages, or an entirely new one should be created to serve as a medium of exchange between the nations and peoples of the world. Pending this final choice, the Bahá'ís are advised to study Esperanto only in consideration of the fact that the learning of this language can considerably facilitate intercommunication between individuals, groups and Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world in the present stage of the evolution of the Faith.*

On April 25, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to Esperantists in Washington, D.C., stating "We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech."

> *Today the greatest need of the world of humanity is discontinuance of the existing misunderstandings among nations. This can be accomplished through the unity of language. Unless the unity of languages is realized, the Most Great Peace and the oneness of the human world cannot be effectively organized and established because the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. Therefore, the question of an auxiliary international tongue has the utmost importance. Through this means international education and training become possible; the evidence and history of the past can be acquired. The spread of the known facts of the human world depends upon language. The explanation of divine teachings can only be through this medium. As long as diversity of tongues and lack of comprehension of other languages continue, these glorious aims cannot be realized. Therefore, the very first service to the world of man is to establish this auxiliary international means of*

> *communication. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the human commonwealth. Through it sciences and arts will be spread among the nations, and it will prove to be the means of the progress and development of all races.* ***We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech.***

One year later, on February 12, 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' addressed the Paris Esperanto Society, as reported in the "Star of the West" magazine..

> *Praise be to God, that Dr Zamenhof has created the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of universal adoption. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for his noble effort, for in this matter he has served his fellowmen well. He has constructed a language which will bestow divine benefits on all peoples. With untiring efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees it gives promise of universal acceptation. Therefore* ***everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto. In the future two languages will be taught in the schools, one the native tongue, the other the international auxiliary language.*** *Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study 50 languages and yet travel through a country and still be at a loss. I, myself, know several of the Oriental languages, but know no Western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.*
>
> ***Please send some teachers to Persia, if you can, so that they may teach Esperanto to the young people. I have written asking some of them to come here to study it.***

> *I hope that it will be promulgated very rapidly - then the world of humanity will find eternal peace; all the nations will associate with one another like mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, and each individual member of the body politic will be fully informed of the thoughts of all.*

This talk was also covered in J.E. Esselmont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the chapter entitled *Universal Language*:

> *At an Esperanto banquet given in Paris in February 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:—*
>
> *Today one of the chief causes of the differences in Europe is the diversity of languages. We say this man is a German, the other is an Italian, then we meet an Englishman and then again a Frenchman. Although they belong to the same race, yet language is the greatest barrier between them. Were a universal auxiliary language in operation they would all be considered as one.*
>
> *His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh wrote about this international language more than forty years ago. He says that as long as an international language is not adopted, complete union between the various sections of the world will be unrealized, for we observe that misunderstandings keep people from mutual association, and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled except through an international auxiliary language.*
>
> *Generally speaking, the whole people of the Orient are not fully informed of events in the West, neither can the Westerners put themselves in sympathetic touch with the Easterners; their thoughts are enclosed in a casket—the international language will be the master key to open it. Were we in possession of a universal language, the Western books could easily be translated into that language, and the Eastern peoples be informed of their contents. In the same way the books of the East could be translated into that language for the benefit of the people in the West. The greatest means of progress towards the union of East and West will be a common language. It will make the whole world one home and become the strongest impulse for human advancement. It will upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity. It will make the earth one universal commonwealth. It will be the cause of love between the children of men. It will cause good fellowship between the various races.*

> ***Now, praise be to God that Dr. Zamenhof has invented the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of becoming the international means of communication. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for this noble effort; for in this way he has served his fellowmen well. With untiring effort and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees Esperanto will become universal. Therefore every one of us must study this language and spread it as far as possible so that day by day it may receive a broader recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world, and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that Esperanto will be adopted as the language of all the future international conferences and congresses, so that all people need acquire only two languages—one their own tongue and the other the international language. Then perfect union will be established between all the people of the world. Consider how difficult it is today to communicate with various nations. If one studies fifty languages one may yet travel through a country and not know the language. Therefore I hope that you will make the utmost effort, so that this language of Esperanto may be widely spread.***

On August 3, 1935, a letter read "Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of [Esperanto], and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles." The letter continued "Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even `Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium."

> *3 August 1935*
>
> *He wishes me particularly to convey to you his most genuine appreciation of your services in connection with the publication of "La Nova Tago" which he hopes will, through your efforts and those of the Esperanto-speaking Bahá'ís both in Germany and abroad, develop gradually into a leading Esperanto review, and thus become an effective medium for the spread of Teachings in Esperantist circles throughout the world. It is in view of the far-reaching possibilities which this publication can*

> *have as a teaching organ, that he has urged the German N.S.A. to resume its publication when, a few months ago, they had almost decided to discontinue printing it.*
>
> *With regard to your request for a special article from the Guardian which you wish to have published in the forthcoming issue of your magazine. He would suggest that you should translate his general letter addressed to the friends a few years ago, entitled "The Goal of a New World Order", as this, he feels, is a very suitable material for publication in that review, and is by far better than anything he can write at present.*
>
> *As to your suggestion regarding a more widespread use of the Esperanto among the Bahá'ís as a medium of correspondence. Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of that language, and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles. He has been specially urging the friends to have the Cause well represented in all Esperanto Congresses and associations, and by this means cultivate greater friendship and cooperation between them and the Esperantists.*
>
> *But in this connection, he feels, he must make it clear that although the Cause views with much sympathy and appreciation the activities which the Esperantists are increasingly initiating for the spread of their language, yet it considers that the adoption of the Esperanto by the entire world is by no means an inevitable fact.* ***Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even `Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium.***

On January 29, 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December 1938, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered

the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> *'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.*

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> *Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.*

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found

working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> *...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.*
>
> *Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:*
>
> > *EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.*

> *His response was decisive:*
>
> > *APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]*
>
> *Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:*
>
> > *REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.*
>
> *She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced fellahin, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.*
>
> *She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.*

From the following section:

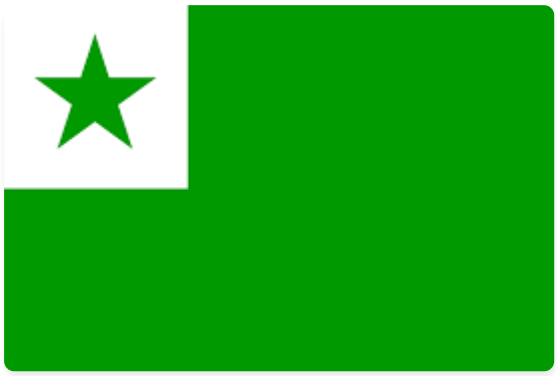
> *Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring*

> *up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:*
>
> > *Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]*
>
> *In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.*

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

> *A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:*
>
> > *HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY*

> *AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]*
>
> *She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.*



Comments

January 7. On this date in 1922, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament was publicly read. Although in the Kitáb-i-'Ahd Bahá'u'lláh designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's successor, in his Will, 'Abdu'l-Bahá establishes the institution of the Guardianship.

Original file: 0384.html (position #153)

January 7. On this date in 1922, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament was publicly read. Although in the Kitáb-i-'Ahd Bahá'u'lláh designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's successor, in his Will, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reprimands his brother as "The Center of Sedition, the Prime Mover of mischief" and establishes the institution of the Guardianship, appointing Shoghi Effendi to this newly-created office.

January 7. On this date in 1922, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and*

Testament&oldid=745828715#Will_and_Testament_of_'Abdu'l-Bahá) was publicly read.

Although in the *Kitáb-i-'Ahd* Bahá'u'lláh designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's successor in his *Will,* 'Abdu'l-Bahá reprimands his brother as "The Center of Sedition, the Prime Mover of mischief" and establishes the institution of the Guardianship#Will*and_Testament_of*.E2.80.98Abdu.E2.80.99l-Bah.C3.A1), appointing Shoghi Effendi to this newly-created office.

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker. They arrived in Haifa on December 29.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, addressed to Shoghi Effendi, was read on January 7, 1922, a few days after Shoghi Effendi's arrival in Haifa. *The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and its Immediate Consequences*

While the Guardianship&oldid=745828715#Shoghi_Effendi_Defines_the_Guardian) was to be a perpetual institution of the Administrative Order, it ceased to exist after the death of Shoghi Effendi because he died having violated Bahá'u'lláh's command in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* that "Unto everyone hath been enjoined the writing of a will." Having no children of his own and having declared every living male descendant of Bahá'u'lláh a Covenant-breaker, Shoghi Effendi left no eligible candidates for the office of Guardian, posing a serious problem given his assertion that "In this Dispensation, divine guidance flows on to us in this world after the Prophet's ascension, through first the Master, and then the Guardians." He had furthermore stated in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* that

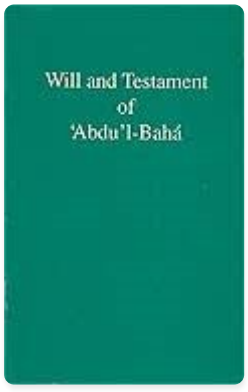
> *Divorced from the institution of the* Guardianship*&oldid=745828715) the* World Order of Bahá'u'lláh *would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. "In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its*

> *prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.*

So fundamental was the office of the Guardianship&oldid=745828715#Shoghi_Effendi_Defines_the_Guardian) , that Bahá'í literature was significantly altered subsequent to Shoghi Effendi's death, with the notable removal of references to "The First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith," the "first and present Guardian," and "the lineage of succeeding Guardians." In some cases, references to the Guardian have been replaced or amended with "the Universal House of Justice" and in other instances references to the duties of the Guardian that were in the present tense have been changed to the past tense, indicating that the Guardianship has ceased.

From 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament*

> *O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—"The child is the secret essence of its sire," that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another* branch *to succeed him."*



Comments

January 7. On this date in 1999, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a reference to the Zoroastrian text Dinkird, or "Acts of the Religion" (dín-kird) in John Ferraby's "All Things Made New", and on the authenticity of the Zoroastrian scriptures.

Original file: 0383.html (position #152)

January 7. On this date in 1999, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a reference to the Zoroastrian text Dinkird, or "Acts of the Religion" (dín-kird) in John Ferraby's *All Things Made New*, and on the authenticity of the Zoroastrian scriptures.

Zoroastrianism, Reference to, in All Things Made New by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1999-03-27 MEMORANDUM To: Universal House of Justice From: Research Department A Quotation in All Things Made New

The Research Department has studied the email message of 7 January 1999 to the Universal House of Justice from Mr. xxxx. Mr. xxxx states that he recently found on a

Bahá'í Web site a quotation from the Hand of the Cause of God John Ferraby's All Things Made New.1 The source of the quotation is given as "Dínkird", which he takes to be the same as "Denkard" or "Dinkard", that is, a "Zoroastrian encyclopedia of the 9th century, A.D., rather than a work of Zoroaster". He has tried to find this quotation in a Web version of the 1896 translation of the Denkard but has not found anything resembling it. He asks whether the Research Department is aware of "any Zoroastrian text identical to or similar to" the quotation in question. As he has been unable to gain access to a copy of Mr. Ferraby's book, he also asks whether the quotation appears in all of the editions.

Source of the Quotation in All Things Made New

The text in question is the following: When a thousand two hundred and some years have passed from the inception of the religion of the Arabian and the overthrow of the Kingdom of Irán and the degradation of the followers of My religion, a descendant of the Iranian kings will be raised up as a prophet.2

As Mr. xxxx is aware, the only source provided for this quotation in All Things Made New is "Dinkird",3 which is translated as "Acts of the Religion". He is correct that the Denkard is a 9th century compilation of the preserved Zoroastrian scriptural materials, and summaries and commentaries on the contents of the Avesta. It is written in Middle Persian using the Pahlavi script. With regard to his comment that, in the Web version, the first 65 chapters of Book III were missing, we note that according to the Encyclopedia Iranica, the Denkard was originally divided into nine volumes of unequal importance, but the first two and the beginning of the third have been lost.4 The Research Department has neither the time nor the resources to attempt to identify the specific text in the Denkard which is the source of the quotation in question. This is a project for future Bahá'í scholars. However, it is interesting to note that in Muhammad Nátiq's Al-Munázarátu'd-Díníyyah, there are quoted two passages which, if combined, appear to provide a similar text.5 These two passages are referenced to the Denkard, but unfortunately no additional identifying information is provided (see photocopy of the relevant page attached).

Regarding whether the quotation in question appears in all of the editions of Mr. Ferraby's book, it does appear in each of the three editions, as follows: First Edition, 1957, page 171. Revised Edition, 1975, page 171. Second Revised Edition, 1987, page 174.

Authenticity of Zoroastrian Scripture

As Mr. xxxx suggests, we do not consider authoritative the Zoroastrian scripture to which we have access today. In a letter dated 22 June 1943, written on behalf of the Guardian to

an individual, we read: In the Bahá'í teachings it states that all the Prophets have foretold a Promised One Who is Bahá'u'lláh. We cannot be sure of the authenticity, word for word, of any of the past Holy Scriptures except the Qur'án, as they were either not written down during the Prophet's lifetime or have been changed in the course of time and the originals lost; what we can be sure of is that when Bahá'u'lláh or the Master stated that Zoroaster foretold a Promised One's coming, it is correct. The Zoroastrians have no way of contradicting this assertion, as they themselves know their scriptures are not in the original form, and therefore not absolutely authentic.

According to scholars of the subject, of all the Zoroastrian scripture presently known, only the Gathas, 17 hymns which have been preserved in the ancient language spoken by Zoroaster, are attributable to Him.

Attachment [see photocopies below] All Things Made New: A Comprehensive Outline of the Bahá'í Faith, 2nd. Rev. Edition (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987). Ibid., p. 174. Other spellings of this word are Denkard, Dînkard, and Denkart. Encyclopedia Iranica, vol. VII (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1996), p. 285. (Cairo: Faaju'lláh Dhakí Al-Kurdí, 1342 AH), p. 37.

Comments

January 7. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice cabled all NSAs regarding the Conference on Ḥuqúqu’lláh.

January 7. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice cabled all NSAs regarding the Conference on Ḥuqúqu’lláh.

> *Conference on Ḥuqúqu’lláh*
>
> *7 JANUARY 1987*
>
> *To all National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *13.1 CONVEY ALL BELIEVERS JOYOUS NEWS CONVOCATION HOLY LAND DURING FIRST THREE DAYS JANUARY CONFERENCE ON ḤUQÚQU’LLÁH AS FIRST MAJOR STEP IN SIX YEAR PLAN TOWARDS FULFILLMENT GOAL EDUCATION ENTIRE COMMUNITY THIS GREAT LAW OF GOD.*
>
> *13.2 TRUSTEE ḤUQÚQU’LLÁH HAND CAUSE GOD DR. ‘ALÍ MUḤAMMAD VARQÁ AND FIVE HIS DEPUTIES WITH REPRESENTATIVES INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER AND WORLD CENTER FINANCE DEPARTMENT MET IN CONSULTATION WITH UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE EXAMINE ALL ASPECTS APPLICATION THIS LAW WORLDWIDE. ACTION TAKEN DEVELOP MIGHTY INSTITUTION THROUGH APPOINTMENT BY TRUSTEE ḤUQÚQU’LLÁH THREE ADDITIONAL DEPUTIES, TWO IN AFRICA ONE IN ASIA, AND ADOPTION MEASURES LEADING ULTIMATE ESTABLISHMENT CENTRAL OFFICE ḤUQÚQU’LLÁH HOLY LAND AT HEART ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER FAITH.*

13.3 DECISIONS TAKEN PREPARE CODIFICATION FOR DISTRIBUTION ALL COMMUNITIES TOGETHER WITH OTHER MATERIALS FACILITATE STUDY FRIENDS THIS LAW OBEDIENCE TO WHICH CHARACTERIZED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS "A BOUNTY WHICH SHALL REMAIN WITH EVERY SOUL IN EVERY WORLD OF THE WORLDS OF GOD."

13.4 DELIGHTED ACTIONS TAKEN BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES DISSEMINATION TEXTS ISSUED 4TH JULY 1985 [1] CONFERENCE STIRRED BY REPORTS WESTERN BELIEVERS ALREADY SPONTANEOUSLY OFFERING ḤUQÚQU'LLÁH ON READING COMPILATION, SWELLING RANKS THOSE WHO HAVE LONG CHERISHED PRIVILEGE OBSERVE THIS LAW URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES WHO HAVE NOT YET PUBLISHED COMPILATION TO EXPEDITE TRANSLATION PUBLICATION. CONDENSED COMPILATION NOW IN COURSE PREPARATION EASE TASK THOSE NATIONAL COMMUNITIES WHICH HAVE LIMITED FACILITIES TRANSLATION.

13.5 IT IS OUR ARDENT PRAYER SACRED THRESHOLD THAT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WILL ABUNDANTLY BLESS PROCESSES NOW SET IN MOTION.

Notes

[1] A reference to the compilation on Ḥuqúqu'lláh; see CC 1:489-527.

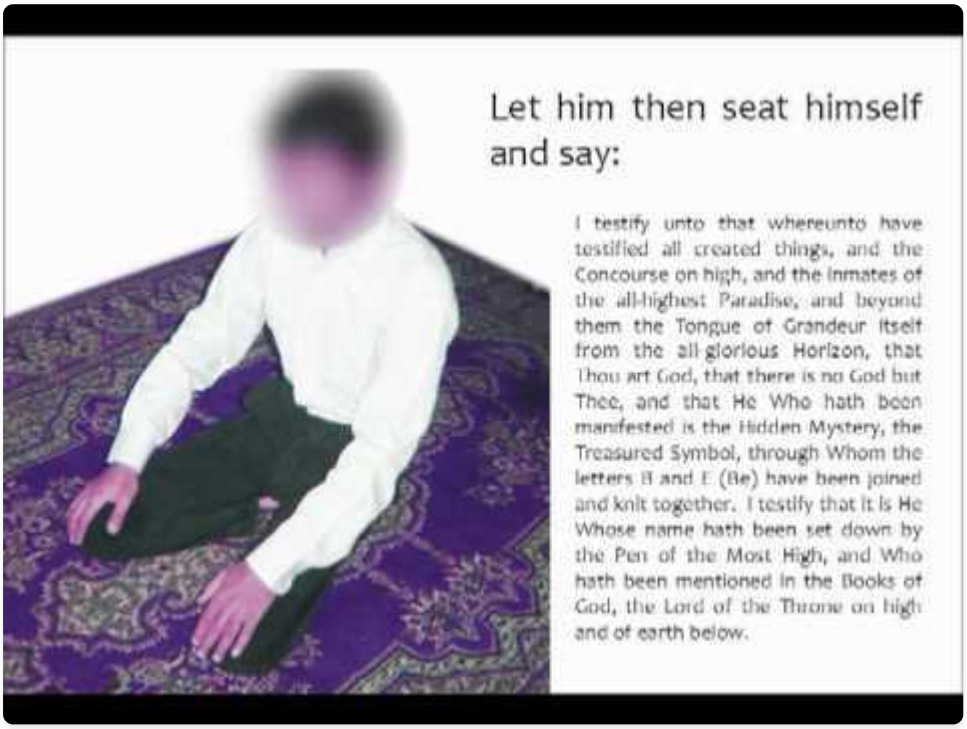
Comments

January 7. On this date in 1975, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "enquiring about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer."

January 7. On this date in 1975, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "enquiring about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer."

> *1534. Instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer*
>
> *"The Universal House of Justice received your letter of 7 January 1975, enquiring about the correct way of following certain instructions in the Long Obligatory Prayer, and has asked us to give you this reply.*
>
> *"In following the direction stating: 'Let him then stand and raise his hands twice in supplication, and say ... ': the believer does not have to read twice the paragraph which follows. Whether the believer raises his hands twice before the reciting of the paragraph, or commences the reciting after having raised his hands once, and raises them a second time soon thereafter, is left to his choice.*
>
> *"As to the direction which states: 'Let him then raise his hands thrice, and say ... ', an individual believer asked the beloved Guardian the following question:*

> *'...the direction to raise the hands thrice and say "Greater is God than every great one." Does this mean after every raising of the hands, or only to be said once, after the three raisings?'*
>
> *"Shoghi Effendi's secretary answered on his behalf as follows: 'The hands should be raised three times and each time the sentence be repeated in conjunction with the act.'"*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, February 13, 1975: Ibid.)*


Let him then seat himself and say:
I testify unto that whereunto have testified all created things, and the Concourse on high, and the inmates of the all-highest Paradise, and beyond them the Tongue of Grandeur itself from the all glorious Horizon, that Thou art God, that there is no God but Thee, and that He Who hath been manifested is the Hidden Mystery, the Treasured Symbol, through Whom the letters B and E (Be) have been joined and knit together. I testify that it is He Whose name hath been set down by the Pen of the Most High, and Who hath been mentioned in the Books of God, the Lord of the Throne on high and of earth below.

Comments

January 7. On this date in 1922, "Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, cabled the Bahá'ís of Iran telling them that Shoghi Effendi was the centre of the Cause; the Bahá'í community of the United States was cabled nine days later on 16 January 1922."

Original file: 0380.html (position #149)

January 7. On this date in 1922, "Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, cabled the Bahá'ís of Iran telling them that Shoghi Effendi was the centre of the Cause; the Bahá'í community of the United States was cabled nine days later on 16 January 1922."

From *The Life of Shoghi Effendi* by Helen Danesh, John Danesh, and Amelia Danesh published in Studying the Writings of Shoghi Effendi, ed. M. Bergsmo. Oxford: George Ronald, 1991...

> *On 7 January 1922 Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, cabled the Bahá'ís of Iran telling them that Shoghi Effendi was the centre of the Cause; the Bahá'í community of the United States was cabled nine days later on 16 January 1922.*

From Chapter 2 in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and its Immediate Consequences"...

> *It was befitting that the Greatest Holy Leaf, and not Shoghi Effendi himself, should announce to the Bahá'í world the provisions of the Master's Will. On 7 January she sent two cables to Persia as follows: "Memorial meetings all over the world have been held. The Lord of all the worlds in His Will and Testament has revealed His instructions. Copy will be sent. Inform believers." and "Will and Testament forwarded Shoghi Effendi Centre Cause." It is significant to recall that 'Abdu'l-Bahá - no doubt in anticipation of events He clearly foresaw - had, in answer to a query from the Tehran Assembly written to them: "You have asked in whose name the real estate and buildings donated should be registered with the Government and the legal deeds issued: they should be registered in the name of Mirza Shoghi Rabbani, who is the son of Mirza Hadi Shirazi and is in London." However great the grief and shock the Master's ascension produced in Persia it is unlikely that the news of Shoghi Effendi's appointment came as much of a surprise to the more informed amongst the friends there, especially after having so recently received such an illuminating [page 48] instruction from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. To the United States the Greatest Holy Leaf cabled on 16 January: "In Will Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of Cause and Head of House of Justice. Inform American friends." In spite of the fact that from the very beginning Shoghi Effendi exhibited both a tactful and masterful hand in dealing with the problems that continually faced him, he leaned very heavily on the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose character, station and love for him made her at once his support and his refuge.*

Comments

January 7. On this date in 1996, Mary Zabolotny McCulloch, Knight of Baha'u'llah for Anticosti Island, died.

Original file: 0379.html (position #148)

January 7. On this date in 1996, Mary Zabolotny McCulloch, Knight of Baha'u'llah for Anticosti Island, died.

Obituary: Knight of Baha'u'llah Mary Zabolotny McCulloch by Universal House of Justice, Kenneth McCulloch, and National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States compiled by Kenneth C. McCulloch. 1996 "The Universal House of Justice was deeply saddened to learn from your email message transmitted on 8 January 1996 of the passing of your dear wife, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Mary Zabolotny McCulloch. You are assured of its ardent prayers at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her soul in the Abha Kingdom. It will also pray on your behalf and that of Laura, that you both may be strengthened and comforted at this difficult time." The above message was received from the Supreme Body of the Bahá'í Faith, on receiving news of the passing of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Mary McCulloch. Here is her story. In our joint memoirs, she wrote: "Back in 1918, in the early hours of a frosty November morning, on November the ninth, a baby girl was born in Winnipeg. Her parents, Michael and Theodora [Olinyk] Zabolotny, were of Ukrainian lineage, from those parts of Ukraine that had been annexed by Austria-Hungary and Russia, respectively. That little girl was later to be known as Mary Zabolotny, and her parents had come to this new land, Canada, by ship across the Atlantic Ocean, to make a new home for themselves in the cold and apparently inhospitable city of Winnipeg. They met and were married there; my father being at the time twenty-two and my mother not quite eighteen. Their wedding day was a cold January 19th, 1915. My brother was born on November 11, 1916, and was given the name Vladimir; later he was called Walter, because it was shorter and easier for the teachers at school to pronounce (and spell). The last name

usually had to be spelled out also, as it was meaningless to the teachers, although in Ukrainian it was a common name meaning `over or beyond the marshes'.

"Except for the occasional children's squabble, we were a happy family, and if my father and mother had their arguments, I was always the peace-maker, and had developed a talent for settling their disputes. At a very early age I had also developed a talent for drawing. At the age of seven I joined the library, and gained a love of books. My parents taught us the love of art, music and poetry, and emphasized many a time the importance of getting a good education, of which they had been deprived themselves. They had left their homes so early in their lives and had to struggle to earn a living in a new and strange land, where they had had to learn English to subsist. Therefore, my father taught himself to read and speak English, with help from those he worked with, and from his children. He worked in lumber camps and for the Canadian National Railways. He sold Ukrainian books in his spare time, which resulted in our acquiring a collection of Ukrainian novels, history and poetry, which my mother loved to read to us. Some of these we still have. I remember the concerts every Sunday evening, when we were expected to get up on the stage and recite poems and sing in the choir or take part in little plays or dramas, in the Ukrainian language, also the dancing, which seemed to satisfy an artistic urge to express myself in that form. When we attended public school, at Michael Faraday school, we were not allowed to forget our own language, and had to attend classes in Ukrainian after four o'clock; this was at times wearisome, but it helped retain our identity. The children on our street were of various backgrounds, English, Scottish, Welsh, German, Jewish and Polish. In fact, Mother had a Jewish friend who assisted her as midwife when I was born, as doctors were scarce, and there was no Medicare at that time."

Mary's education was completed in Winnipeg. After elementary and high school, she entered Wesley College (now the University of Winnipeg) at age 15. For her second year she transferred to the University of Manitoba. Finally, she went to the Winnipeg Art School. "At that time, LeMoine Fitzgerald was the Principal of the School, and a most understanding and wise teacher, whose students adored him. He had been a member of the `Group of Seven' artists, who had become famous for finding new ways of expressing Canadian art."

After she graduated, she worked in commercial art for a while. "At that time I was also going back to Art School, for some refresher courses in drawing and painting from life. There I met a fellow artist, Frances Boyce, who was at the time also working as a commercial artist."

Mary and Frances travelled in Yukon and Alaska for several years, paying their way by

working at whatever jobs were available, or by selling some of their paintings. Their adventures and experiences are far too numerous to detail here. "I then went home to Winnipeg. After these painting trips were finished, and I was back home in Winnipeg, I began to search for a way of life that would approach what my spirit craved, although at the time I did not know what that was.

"I do not recall exactly when my dream happened. Many years ago I had dreamt about the feast spread in our home, and the King and Queen and many guests visiting us. I remember well the table bountifully spread with good food, and the bejewelled wraps of the guests. The Queen beckoned to me, and asked me to fetch her wrap from the closet. In the closet were many garments, studded with jewels. Some of the furs were colored, in purple, etc. There was a crimson evening gown hanging upside-down. I wondered at this, and thought, Is this mine?' Many years later, after becoming a Bahá'í I had read the Tablet of Ahmad (which opens with the words "He is the King, the All-Knowing, the Wise! Lo, the Nightingale of Paradise ...") one evening, and some of the truth of the dream dawned upon me. He is the King' - meant God - and a new Revelation - the Nightingale was Bahá'u'lláh."

"Then, in 1951, a friend from my Art School days, Leonard Woods, sent me a pamphlet on the Bahá'í Faith, saying he thought I would be interested. That was all he said, but after reading the Principles, and a little of the history of the Faith, it seemed to me that I had at last found the Truth, and was ready to support these Principles, but I needed to know more about them. Leonard had said that a friend would contact me, as he was in Vancouver himself. I waited three months and no one contacted me. Then Leonard came from Vancouver to Winnipeg on a holiday. He asked me if I would like to attend a fireside at the home of Angus Cowan, a Winnipeg Bahá'í businessman; he was working for IBM at the time. That was to be a Friday night I would never forget, as this was my first contact with Bahá'ís. Young people met there every Friday to discuss various aspects of the Faith. Angus and Bobby Cowan were very kind and hospitable, sharing much fun and laughter, and with radiant hearts making everyone feel that they were wanted and respected. Many speakers came to that house to talk about some aspect of the Faith, including Glen Eyford and Jamie Bond, both of whom later served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada."

Here is the letter received from the National Spiritual Assembly, which summarizes very well the services Mary offered the Faith:

"To the family and friends of Mrs. Mary McCulloch "Dearly-loved Friends,

"We were most deeply grieved to learn of the passing of Mrs. Mary McCulloch, and extend heartfelt condolences to her husband Ken, their daughter Laura and her family, and Mary's many friends. Although we mourn the loss of Mary's physical presence, we are comforted in the knowledge that she has been freed from the limitations of this earthly existence, to soar in other worlds of God.

"Mary's ardent love for the Faith and commitment to its principles was evidenced by the generosity of her response to its needs. For over four decades, Mary served with exemplary dedication. When she arose to settle in Anticosti Island in 1956, she joined that small band of Bahá'ís around the world who had achieved the honour of being named `Knight of Bahá'u'lláh' by the beloved Guardian. This was the crowning laurel in a life that was characterized by a spirit of loving service.

"In addition to earning the title "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh," future Bahá'í historians will record, with joy and gratitude, her many contributions to the growth and development of the Faith in Canada. Within months of her enrollment as a Bahá'í, she helped form the first Spiritual Assembly in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This was followed shortly by her assisting with the formation of Spiritual Assemblies in several localities in the province of Quebec, and then by her service in Anticosti. For over twenty years, she served in Baker Lake with her husband Ken and their dearly-loved daughter Laura, where the McCullochs established Bahá'í House, promoted translation of Bahá'í materials into Inuktitut, and, above all, conveyed the spirit and principles of the Faith to their neighbours with tireless devotion. For the past several years, Mary and Ken have been stalwart promoters of the teachings of the Faith in The Pas, and in recent years, Mary was able to assist with translation of Bahá'í materials into Ukrainian.

"Mary's signal contributions to the work of the Cause were made with quiet courage, steadfast dedication, and profound resolution. Although we cannot be with you physically, we join you in spirit in offering heartfelt prayers for the progress of this maidservant's valiant soul, and for the comfort of her sorrowing family and many friends.

```
"With abiding love,
"Susan M. Lyons, Assistant Secretary."
```

Mary was not well when we attended the Observances of the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, in Israel in May 1992, and at the Bahá'í World Congress in November 1992. Early in 1993 she had surgery for cancer. She was quite well when we went on Pilgrimage to the World Centre in Israel in November 1993. In April 1995 we went back to Baker

Lake for a one-week visit. In August 1995 she had an accident, and was in hospital 19 days. She got weaker after that, and it appeared that the cancer had come back. Finally, on January 7, she passed away. A couple of weeks before her passing, she told one of the Home Care people that she had fulfilled her life's objectives. Her family wishes to publicly express its appreciation to the Bahá'í community of The Pas, and to the Home Care staff, for all the help they provided at this time.

Mary was predeceased by her parents, her brother Walter, and her grandson Shawn. She is survived by her husband, Ken, her daughter Laura, son-in-law Robin Nablo, and grandchildren Curtis and Sumerlyn.

I will conclude with these words, written by the Custodians of the Faith in 1958.

Words of the Custodians, read at the Bahá'í World Congress, London, England, 1963 (at which we were present):

"The work of Bahá'u'lláh lies before us to be completed. No one generation will do this; a thousand years at least are required to carry out and mature the specific provisions of His Dispensation. But to each man his opportunity, to each generation its tasks. ... Great moments in history require great deeds; great men are not necessarily those best qualified to be great, but rather those who see their chance and seize it, with love and courage, when it offers itself. The records of our Faith show that its heroes and heroines, its saints and martyrs, sprang mostly from the rank and file, but what they possessed, which raised them to the summits of fame and glory, were vision and faith." - Ministry of the Custodians, pp. 104, 106.

Comments

January 8. On this date in 1918, W. Wilson addressed Congress with his Fourteen Points. 'Abdu'l-Bahá would write "As to President Wilson, the fourteen principles which he hath enunciated are mostly found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and I therefore hope that he will be confirmed and assisted."

Original file: 0378.html (position #147)

January 8. On this date in 1918, Woodrow Wilson addressed Congress outlining his Fourteen Points. 'Abdu'l-Bahá would write "As to President Wilson, the fourteen principles which he hath enunciated are mostly found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and I therefore hope that he will be confirmed and assisted." An avowed foreign interventionist, imperialist, and Social Darwinist who spread racial segregation in the federal government, Wilson's legacy is still defended by the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "As to President Wilson, the fourteen principles which he hath enunciated are mostly found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and I therefore hope that he will be confirmed and assisted. Now is the dawn of universal peace; my hope is that its morn will fully break, converting the gloom of war, of strife and of wrangling among men into the light of union, of harmony and of affection."

'Abdu'l-Bahá also wrote "The President of the Republic, Dr. Wilson, is indeed serving the Kingdom of God for he is restless and strives day and night that the rights of all men may be preserved safe and secure, that even small nations, like greater ones, may dwell in peace and comfort, under the protection of Righteousness and Justice. This purpose is indeed a lofty one. I trust that the incomparable Providence will assist and confirm such souls under all conditions."

> *The President of the Republic, Dr. Wilson, is indeed serving the Kingdom of God for he is restless and strives day and night that the rights of all men may be preserved safe and secure, that even small nations, like greater ones, may dwell in peace and comfort, under the protection of Righteousness and Justice. This purpose is indeed a lofty one. I trust that the incomparable Providence will assist and confirm such souls under all conditions. (ʻAbdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 110)*
>
> *As to President Wilson, the fourteen principles which he hath enunciated are mostly found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and I therefore hope that he will be confirmed and assisted. Now is the dawn of universal peace; my hope is that its morn will fully break, converting the gloom of war, of strife and of wrangling among men into the light of union, of harmony and of affection. (ʻAbdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 311-312)*

Comments

January 8. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled a British teaching conference "BRITISH BAHA'I PIONEERS MAGNIFICENT SUCCESS HISTORIC ENTERPRISE LAUNCHED AFRICAN CONTINENT COURSE TWO YEAR PLAN FORMULATED BRITISH BAHA'I COMMUNITY. GOALS FIRST EPOCH-MAKING STAGE GLORIOUS OVERSEAS MISSION..."

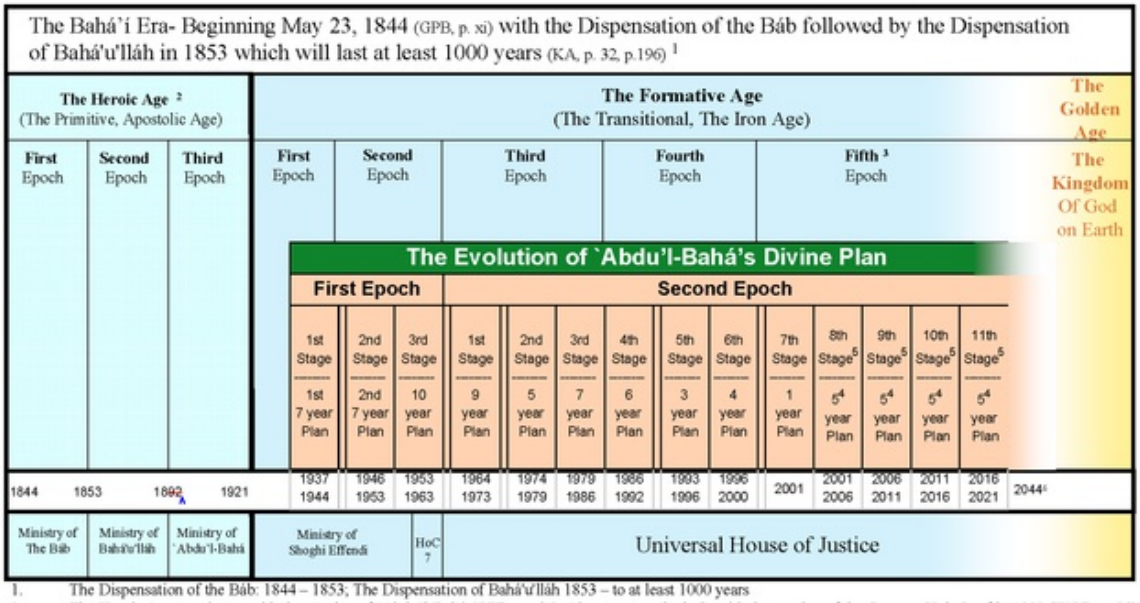
January 8. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled a British teaching conference "BRITISH BAHA'I PIONEERS MAGNIFICENT SUCCESS HISTORIC ENTERPRISE LAUNCHED AFRICAN CONTINENT COURSE TWO YEAR PLAN FORMULATED BRITISH BAHA'I COMMUNITY. GOALS FIRST EPOCH-MAKING STAGE GLORIOUS OVERSEAS MISSION..."

> *8 January 1953 (Teaching Conference)*
>
> *MOVED PLACE RECORD EXPRESSION ABIDING APPRECIATION NOTABLE CONTRIBUTION BRITISH BAHA'I PIONEERS MAGNIFICENT SUCCESS HISTORIC ENTERPRISE LAUNCHED AFRICAN CONTINENT COURSE* TWO YEAR PLAN *FORMULATED BRITISH BAHA'I COMMUNITY. GOALS FIRST EPOCH-MAKING STAGE GLORIOUS OVERSEAS MISSION FOLLOWERS BAHA'U'LLAH BRITISH ISLES NOBLY ACHIEVED. APPEAL ATTENDANTS CONFERENCE FOCUS ATTENTION FLEETING MONTHS AHEAD CONSOLIDATION HOMEFRONT CONSTITUTING NO LESS VITAL PHASE SECOND COLLECTIVE ENTERPRISE BRITISH BAHA'I HISTORY. URGE PARTICIPANTS RESOLVE UPON RETURN RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES EXERT UTMOST FAN FLAME PIONEERING SPIRIT UTILISE EVERY AVAILABLE MEANS ENSURE ALL ASPECTS TRIUMPHANT CONSUMMATION* PLAN. *TOTAL SUCCESS INTERNAL EXTERNAL PHASES PRESENT UNDERTAKING WILL CONSTITUTE BEFITTING CONTRIBUTION STEADFASTLY LABOURING HIGHLY ESTEEMED TENACIOUSLY LOYAL BRITISH BAHA'I COMMUNITY WORLD WIDE CELEBRATIONS HOLY YEAR PAVE WAY EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION ITS MEMBERS IMPENDING* TEN YEAR CRUSADE *MARKING OPENING THIRD COLLECTIVE ENTERPRISE INAUGURATED SINCE INCEPTION FAITH BRITISH ISLES SIGNALISING SECOND MEMORABLE STAGE THEIR UNFOLDING MISSION FOREIGN FIELDS DESTINED EMBRACE TERRITORIES BRITISH CROWN BOTH AFRICAN EUROPEAN CONTINENTS. PRAYING FERVENTLY ATTAINMENT OBJECTIVES ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENT DISTANT GOALS.*
>
> *SHOGHI*

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 8. On this date 2000, the UHJ wrote "Why..has this society been impotent? The answer to this question, as amply evidenced by decades of contentious history, cannot be found in political passion, conflicting expressions of class interest, or technical recipes..."

January 8. On this date 2000, the Universal House of Justice wrote the Youth Congress in Paraguay, also quoted in Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth, Unit 1, "Why..has this society been impotent? The answer to this question, as amply evidenced by decades of contentious history, cannot be found in political passion, conflicting expressions of class interest, or technical recipes. What is called for is a spiritual revival, as a prerequisite to the successful application of political, economic and technological instruments. But there is a need for a catalyst. Be assured that, in spite of your small numbers, you are the channels through which such a catalyst can be provided."

The Universal House of Justice

8 January 2000

To the Friends Gathered at the Youth Congress in Paraguay

Dear Friends,

You have come together to examine the progress of a youth movement which embraces larger and larger numbers of participants from generation to generation. As you deliberate on the issues before you, you can take pride in the accomplishments of the community of the Greatest Name in your continent. Youth have played a key role in the impressive unfoldment of the Four Year Plan throughout Latin America, and you can look forward with confidence to the harvest you are destined to reap.

As we recently stated, advancing the process of entry by troops will remain the focus of the global Plans that will carry the Bahá'í community to the end of the first century of the Formative Age. You and those who will be attracted to the Faith through your teaching efforts will bring about signal developments that will mark this twenty-one year period. As a result of recent endeavors to consolidate the work of institutes, your communities are now endowed with the capacity to address the training needs of your rapidly growing ranks. This training will help you exploit the opportunities offered you at this crucial moment in history. In the face of these opportunities, you need to examine and shape the discourse in which you will engage.

At the end of the twentieth century, the majority of the population of Latin America is under the age of 30. As this generation of youth assumes the responsibilities of conducting the affairs of society, it will encounter a landscape of bewildering contrast. On the one hand, the region can justly boast brilliant achievements in the intellectual, technological and economic spheres. On the other, it has failed to reduce widespread poverty or to avoid a rising sea of violence that threatens to submerge its peoples. ***Why—and the question needs to be asked plainly—has this society been impotent, despite its great wealth, to remove the injustices that are tearing its fiber apart?***

The answer to this question, as amply evidenced by decades of contentious history, cannot be found in political passion, conflicting expressions of class interest, or technical recipes. What is called for is

> ***a spiritual revival, as a prerequisite to the successful application of political, economic and technological instruments. But there is a need for a catalyst. Be assured that, in spite of your small numbers, you are the channels through which such a catalyst can be provided.***
>
> *Be not dismayed if your endeavors are dismissed as utopian by the voices that would oppose any suggestion of fundamental change. Trust in the capacity of this generation to disentangle itself from the embroilments of a divided society. To discharge your responsibilities, you will have to show forth courage, the courage of those who cling to standards of rectitude, whose lives are characterized by purity of thought and action, and whose purpose is directed by love and indomitable faith. As you dedicate yourselves to healing the wounds with which your peoples have been afflicted, you will become invincible champions of justice.*
>
> *We assure you of our loving prayers for the success of your deliberations.*
>
> *[signed: The Universal House of Justice]*

Also quoted in Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth, Unit 1...

> *"As this generation of youth assumes the responsibilities of conducting the affairs of society, it will encounter a landscape of bewildering contrast. On the one hand, the region can justly boast brilliant achievements in the intellectual, technological and economic spheres. On the other, it has failed to reduce widespread poverty or to avoid a rising sea of violence that threatens to submerge its peoples.* ***Why—and the question needs to be asked plainly—has this society been impotent, despite its great wealth, to remove the injustices that are tearing its fiber apart?***
>
> ***"The answer to this question, as amply evidenced by decades of contentious history, cannot be found in political passion, conflicting expressions of class interest, or technical recipes. What is called for is a spiritual revival, as a prerequisite to the successful application of political, economic and technological instruments. But there is a need for a catalyst. Be assured that, in spite of your small numbers, you are the channels through which such a catalyst can be provided."*** *54*

> *54 From a message dated 8 January 2000 written by the Universal House of Justice to the Friends gathered at the Youth Congress in Paraguay.*

Comments

January 8. On this date in 1901, May Ellis Bolles wrote Agnes Baldwin Alexander a letter stating "Praise be God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth..."

Original file: 0375.html (position #144)

January 8. On this date in 1901, May Ellis Bolles, the future wife of Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell and mother of 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wrote Agnes Baldwin Alexander a letter stating "Praise be God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth...My Lord appeared to me in a vision twice, two years before I heard the Great Message...I feel by your beautiful letter that God has chosen you to be a servant in His blessed Vineyard, and that you will be greatly blessed...I am longing with great love to see you, to greet you in, the Truth that you may enter with your brothers and sisters in this city into the full joy and peace."

January 8, 1901

My precious Sister:

Praise be God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth.

Please God we may soon welcome you in our midst in Paris and that you may then receive the full Revelation, and much help and instruction. In the meantime, I send you the enclosed pamphlets, Tablets and prayers, which by the Grace of God will illumine your understanding and fill you with the Breath of Life. I also enclose my photograph of our Great and Glorious Lord, which was given to me when I made the pilgrimage to Acca, at the foot of Mount Carmel, the New Holy Jerusalem.

My Lord appeared to me in a vision twice, two years before I heard the Great Message, and when, by the great bounty of God, and without regard to my unworthiness, I was permitted to be among the first Americans to visit Acca -- I beheld my dear Lord, I knew Him by my visions.

The picture I send you of Him was taken about twenty years ago and does not give any adequate idea of His Greatness, Majesty and Power, which are beyond any words to describe -- while His wonderful unspeakable love and kindness to everyone is unlike anything we have ever known or dreamed of: Since that time my whole life has been devoted to His service, to teaching and spreading the Cause of God.

I feel by your beautiful letter that God has chosen you to be a servant in His blessed Vineyard, and that you will be greatly blessed.

I am longing with great love to see you, to greet you in, the Truth that you may enter with your brothers and sisters in this city into the full joy and peace.

As to the writings concerning this great religion, they are now being translated slowly from the Arabic and Persian, and each year diffuses more widely the teachings and knowledge, for we are the pioneers and are believers in the most wonderful time of His Appearance.

... Read Isaiah which contains wonderful prophecies of these the "latter days", "the end of the world" which means the end of the power of evil - for this is the dawn of

Most Great Peace, the "Day of God" which is not followed by the night, and already the Sun of Truth has risen and is shining from the zenith.

One thing dearest spiritual sister, I would say to you. Although the fire of the love of God is burning in your heart, and you are longing to spread the glad tidings, be very careful - for every soul is not ripe - and our dear Lord has told us never to give to drink of this pure water of Life, but to the thirsty. I know just how you feel, for I was just so myself - but I quickly learned that the Truth is a Spirit which only God can impart, and when it is in us then it is imparted thro [sic] us, for we are nothing - God is all - the Wonderful, the Mighty. He is sufficient for everything.

I do not know if dear Mrs. D. gave you the prayers. We should learn them by heart, and say them 2 or 3 times daily, then we grow spiritually with great power and rapidity, for these prayers are unlike any others, they are from God Himself.

May God shower upon you like His greatest blessings and confirm you in the Glorious Truth.

I am your loving and devoted Sister in the love and service of our Lord.

May Ellis Bolles

100, rue du Bac, Paris.

Comments

January 8. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "There is no time to lose. A great responsibility rests on the elected representatives of the most envied community in the Bahá'í world...countless favors showered upon it by 'Abdu'l-Bahá..."

Original file: 0374.html (position #143)

January 8. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "There is no time to lose. A great responsibility rests on the elected representatives of the most envied community in the Bahá'í world, whose advantages are unique, whose capacities are incomparable, whose vision, courage, tenacity, resolution and loyalty are exemplary; which has amply demonstrated its worthiness to be the recipient of the countless favors showered upon it by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of the specific bounty conferred upon the rulers and presidents of the continent of which it is a part by no one less than Bahá'u'lláh Himself, in His Most Holy Book."

THE UNFINISHED TASKS The recent response of the American friends to my appeal for pioneers to go forth and settle in virgin territories and places where the need is greatest has raised a load from my heart, and mightily reinforced the hopes and expectations which their past achievements have aroused within me. We stand at the threshold of the last year of the first Bahá'í century. The unfinished tasks, however much they have been reduced, are still formidable. The Temple is as yet unfinished. The initiation of a nation-wide publicity campaign, intelligently directed and energetically pursued, utilizing to the full the advantages gained in recent years in so many fields of Bahá'í activity still remains to be undertaken. Measures for a befitting celebration of the Centennial anniversary of the Faith must be carefully considered and duly executed. The aims and purposes of our beloved Cause, the achievements of its heroes, martyrs, teachers, pioneers and administrators, the unity of its followers, the character of the institutions they have reared, should, one and all, be ably presented, widely broadcast, carefully explained in publications, through the radio and the press. ***There is no time to lose. A great responsibility rests on the elected representatives of the most envied community in the Bahá'í world, whose advantages are unique, whose capacities are incomparable, whose vision, courage, tenacity, resolution and loyalty are exemplary; which has amply demonstrated its worthiness to be the recipient of the countless favors showered upon it by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of the specific bounty conferred upon the rulers and presidents of the continent of which it is a part by no one less than Bahá'u'lláh Himself, in His Most Holy Book. To His "Apostles," as testified by the Center of His Covenant, I direct my fervent plea that they establish, beyond the shadow of a doubt, in these concluding months of the first Bahá'í century, their indisputable right to be designated by so exalted a title, and vindicate their ability to execute the mission with which that title has invested them.***

January 8, 1943

Comments

January 8. On this date in 1924, Hushmand Fatheazam was born. He served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of India from 1955 to 1963 when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice where he served until retiring in 2003.

Original file: 0373.html (position #142)

January 8. On this date in 1924, Hushmand Fatheazam was born. He served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of India when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice where he served until retiring in 2003.

Hushmand Fatheazam was born into a Baha'i family in Tehran, Iran, on January 8, 1924.

He worked as a curator at the library of the Faculty of Arts at Tehran University from 1950 to 1952, and obtained Masters degrees in arts from Tehran University. Fatheazam went to India as an pioneer in 1953, where he obtained a second Masters degree in Arts from the Wiswa Bharati University in 1954. Other Iranians who would follow Fatheazam in pioneering to Iran include Payman Mohajer, Borhanoddin Afshin, and Lesan Azadi.

Following his move to India to assist Baha'i development work there, he held the post of

lecturer in Persian literature at Punjab University, from 1959 to 1963. He was staff artist at All-India Radio from 1955 to 1963. During that period, he was managing director of the Baha'i Publishing Trust, New Delhi.

Hushmand Fatheazam served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India from 1955 to 1963 when he was elected in the inaugural election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963, serving on that body until retiring at the age of 79 in 2003.

After his retirement, he continued to give presentations, including his talk titled "Some Observations on the Scope and Value of Baha'i Scholarship," which was the 26th Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture at the 32nd annual conference of the North American Association for Baha'i Studies, which was a four-day conference that concluded on September 1, 2008.

> *While underlining the vital contributions of Baha'i scholarship to the development of the Baha'i Faith and the progress of society, he cautioned against the temptations of intellectual pride that scholars from all traditions have historically been susceptible to, and urged Baha'is to pursue paths of scholarship with the utmost humility.*
>
> *Mr. Fatheazam promoted scholarship as the continued independent search for truth incumbent upon all human beings. He highlighted the importance of this role by emphasizing the two identities of the Baha'i Faith, one as a religion, described through the analogy of the tree, and one as a limitless reality, described through the analogy of light.*

A poet, author and playwright, he wrote an introduction to the Baha'i Faith, *The New Garden*, which has been translated into some 109 languages. He was married to Mrs. Shafiqih Fatheazam (nee Farzar-Asdagh) with whom he had three children, including his son Shahbaz.

He died on August 13, 2013 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Comments

January 8. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that the great failure to respond to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions released forces, which must culminate in a still more violent upheaval and agony. The thing is out of hand, so to speak, and it is too late to avert catastrophic trials."

Original file: 0372.html (position #141)

January 8. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer, warning that "it seems apparent that the great failure to respond to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, appeals and warnings issued in the 19th Century, has now sent the world along a path, and released forces, which must culminate in a still more violent upheaval and agony. The thing is out of hand, so to speak, and it is too late to avert catastrophic trials."

431. Bahá'ís Can Help to Mitigate Suffering of Mankind

No doubt to the degree we Bahá'ís the world over--strive to spread the Cause and live up to its teachings, there will be some mitigation to the suffering of the peoples of the world. But it seems apparent that the great failure to respond to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, appeals and warnings issued in the 19th Century, has now sent the world along a path, and released forces, which must culminate in a still more violent upheaval and agony. ***The thing is out of hand, so to speak, and it is too late to avert catastrophic trials.***

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 8, 1949)

Comments

January 8. On this date in 1925, W. Smith Murray, who was then in charge of the U.S. Consulate in Tehran, wrote to Secretary of State Hughes on the Bahá'ís in the Middle East, the "Imbrie affair," the character of the Bahá'ís, and the possibility of the Faith's spread in Persia.

Original file: 0371.html (position #140)

January 8. On this date in 1925, W. Smith Murray, who was then in charge of the U.S. Consulate in Tehran, wrote [also here] to Secretary of State Hughes on the Bahá'ís in the Middle East, the "Imbrie affair," the character of the Bahá'ís, and the possibility of the Faith's spread in Persia, noting "I have been informed by prominent Bahá'ís in Teheran that the Prime Minister secretly cherishes a high regard for the cause, but that, owing to political considerations, he dares not express himself. It is said that at the time when he was a simple Cossack on duty at the Roshanee hospital, a Bahá'í institution, he was greatly impressed by the kindliness and humanitarianism of the Bahá'í attendants which he has never forgotten. Be that as it may, the fact is that he has permitted Bahá'í officers of

unquestionable ability to rise to high rank in the army."

> *Legation of the United States of America*
>
> *Teheran, Persia*
>
> *January 8, 1925*
>
> *Department of State Department of Near Eastern Affairs*
>
> *The Honorable The Secretary of State,*
>
> *Washington.*
>
> *Sir:*
>
> *I have the honor to submit for the information of the Department A CONSIDERATION OF THE BAHAI RELIGION, ITS TENETS, THE CHARACTER OF ITS FOLLOWERS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ITS SPREAD IN PERSIA AND ELSEWHERE [also here].*
>
> *A treatment of this topic at the present time appears to be particularly opportune owing to the fact that, as the Department is aware, Bahá'ísm formed the background of the Imbrie incident, and that the late Vice Consul's denunciation as a Bahá'í at the Sakha [sic] Khaneh probably resulted in his tragic death.*
>
> *In discussing the matter with the Bahá'ís of Teheran, they have repeatedly stated that they consider Mr. Imbrie to have been a martyr to the cause. It is claimed that the Mohammedan clergy had prepared a list of more than one thousand Bahá'ís and designated them for massacre on the tenth day of Moharrem (August 12, 1924); and that the premature explosion of fanatical fury which resulted in the death of Mr. Imbrie relieved for the same time being the pressure upon them and doubtless saved their lives.*
>
> *There is some reason to give credence to this statement of the Bahá'ís, owing to the incident with which Mr. Imbrie was connected in affording protection to Dr. Susan I. Moody, and ardent American Bahá'í, who has lived in Teheran for more than fifteen years. It appears from Dr. Moody's own story that, as a result of certain rumors which had reached her ears as to the intention of a certain fanatical group of Moslems to murder her upon July 12, she appealed to the*

American Voce Consul some days previously, requesting that he assure her adequate protection. Vice Consul Imbrie immediately addressed himself to the Chief of Police and requested that an ample guard be stationed in the neighborhood of Dr. Moody's house. During the night of July 12 a mob, estimated by Dr. Moody to exceed two hundred and fifty persons, gathered outside her door demanding her blood. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, who arrived in a flying column to her rescue, the mob was immediately dispersed and no damage was done. A significant phase of the affair was that the column was led by a prominent Bahá'í officer which doubtless accounted for its efficient action. In the succeeding days, and until the killing of Mr. Imbrie, Dr. Moody was constantly threatened in the streets, and she heard even children remark "they are going to kill Dr. Moody".

The above mentioned incident raises the question which is an exceedingly difficult one, namely, of protecting American Bahá'ís in Persia. The Department will recall the unfortunate experience in 1913 of two American Bahá'í women, Dr. Sarah A. Clock, and Miss Lillian F. Kappes, the latter being at the time the Director of the Bahá'í Girls' School in Teheran, who were cruelly beaten and robbed.

Dr. Moody, despite her advanced years, appears to be a lady of unwonted courage, and seems even to thrive under the constant threats of violence made against her by the Mohammedan masses. Instead of living in discreet seclusion in some out of the way part of town, Dr. Moody has her office on the Nasserieh, one of the principle business streets leading to the bazaar, and over the drug-store of a prominent Persian Bahá'í. In this way she has scarcely been able to draw near her windows without attracting the attention of passersby below in the street who rarely fail to brandish their fists at her and threaten her with violence. She has been living for the past years with Miss Elizabeth H. Stewart, a Bahá'í trained nurse.

The Legation was much relieved when both ladies left Teheran last November to return to the United States, ostensibly only for a visit. It is hoped however that they will decide not to return to Persia inasmuch as it is extremely difficult to guarantee them adequate protection in this fanatical country. Like many converts to a new religion, Dr. Moody is a militant champion of her adopted faith, which she preaches with the energy of a Carrie Nation.

One of the most remarkable features of Bahá'ísm in this country has been the active interest evinced in its propagation by the Bahá'ís of American. Aside from

Dr. Moody's medical activities, their principal efforts have been concentrated upon the Bahá'í Girls' School founded in 1907, and which has, until very recently, always had an American woman as its head. Miss Kappes was until her death in December 1920 the director of that turbulent institution, and during the summer of 1922, Dr. G. Coy, her successor, a young women of unusual scholastic attainments and enthusiasm for the cause, arrived to carry on the work. Owing to the constant friction with the Persian authorities and obstructions placed in her way she decided last year to return to America. I am informed that the Bahá'ís are at the present time negotiating with their American co-religionists for the dispatch to Persia of Miss Coy's successor.

As was to be expected, the activity of American Bahá'ís in Persia has aroused the bitterest antagonism of the American Christian missionaries in the country who regard the presence of their non-Christian compatriots in the country as damaging evidence to the Moslems of the lack of solidarity in the Christian world.

Before proceeding to a consideration of Bahá'ísm as such, which is the last of five purely Persian religious movements in the Persian Empire, during the period of three thousand years, it may well to refer in brief to the four preceding movements, two of which successfully invaded Europe.

From the point of view of religious inspiration, Persia remains incomparable among the nations of the ancient and modern world. Zoroaster, who was their first and greatest prophet, was born in Urumia in about 660 B.C., and founded a religion which was destined to hold undisputed sway in Persia for a thousand years and to the persist even to the present day.

About a half century before the Christian era, a modified form of Zoroastrianism called Mithraism, whose followers worshipped Mithra, the god of Light and Prosperity as well as the protector of monarchs, made its appearance in Rome where it gained a considerable following among the common people. It interesting that, for more than a century, Mithraism and Christianity were bitter rivals for the religious conquest of Europe, and that the outcome of the struggle between these two faiths was at first by no means a foregone conclusion.

The third religious movement of Persian origin, and the second to make a successful invasion of Europe, was the cult founded by Mani, whose followers were styled Manichaeans. He was born in 215 A.D., converted the contemporary Persian monarch, Shapur, and acquired a considerable following in his own

country. His religion has been styled a Christianized Zoroastrianism, although its outstanding feature was its rigid asceticism which prohibited marriage in the belief that the extinction of the human race and its reabsorption into the God-head was for the best of humanity.

Manichaeism spread eastward into Tibet, where it is still practiced, and westward into southern France where its followers were the Albigenses against whom a crusade for their destruction was led by Simonde Montfort in 1209.

The fourth great movement, this time religio-communist in character, was that of Mazdak, born about the middle of the fifth century, A.D., who, during the reign of King Kobad in 487 of the Christian era, converted thousands to his doctrines. According to these, all men were born equal and had the right to maintain their equality through life. consequently property and women should be held in common. On the more spiritual side he taught abstemiousness, devotion and the sacredness of animal life.

King Kobad who had meanwhile been converted to the new cause, finally ordered the massacre of the Mazdakites in 523 A.D. owing to a conspiracy to depose him.

The founder of the Bahá'í religion, Seyid Ali Mohammed, the son of a grocer of Shiraz, was born in that city in 1820. Owing to his early piety and intelligence he was sent to Karbela, the sacred Shia city of Iraq, to be educated where, at the age of twenty-four, he proclaimed himself to be the "Bab" or Gate, a term doubtlessly intended to convey the idea that he was the Gate to Heaven and the expression of the Divine Will on earth. He shortly thereafter proceeded to Mecca, and upon his return to Persia began to preach the new faith at Bushire, where he rapidly acquired a considerable following. His success, as in the case of Christ, immediately aroused the alarm of the orthodox clergy who set a trap for him in order to be able to accuse him of heresy. He was asked to write down a statement of his claims, which he consented to do. When it was examined it was found to be illegible, so he was immediately seized and thrown into prison.

He was conveyed a prisoner to Maku, in the province of Azerbaijan, where he remained until his transfer to Chirik near Urumia. It was there that he declared himself to be the twelfth Imam whose coming the orthodox Mohammedans are awaiting in the same fashion as do the Jews the Messiah and the Christians the Christ.

He was finally executed in Tabriz in the year 1850, and his remains were secretly borne to the Holy Land and interred on Mount Carmel.

The Bab has always been regarded by the Bahá'ís as merely a forerunner of one greater than him who was to succeed him. He is the John the Baptist of the Bahá'ís.

He was succeeded by Mirza Yahya, a youth of nineteen, known as the Subh-i-Ezel (Morning of Eternity), who was apparently nominated by the Bab to be his successor. He appears to have held unquestioned away over the faithful until 1866 when his authority was disputed by his elder brother, Baháullah (Glory of God), born in Teheran in 1817, who succeeded in deposing him and in assuming full authority as the Bab's successor. Owing to the hostility of both the Shiah and Sunni Mohammedans, the latter was interred at Acre where he died in 1892.

Baháullah was succeeded by his son Abdul-Bahá, who was born in Teheran in 1844. During the greater part of his life he remained at Haifa in the holy Land. In 1912 however he made a tour of Europe and the United States and is said, during an address in California in October of that year, to have prophesied in the following words the outbreak of the World War within two years:

"We are on the eve of the Battle of Armageddon referred to in the sixteenth chapter of Revelations. The time is two years hence, when only a spark will set aflame the whole of Europe. The social unrest in all countries, the growing religious scepticism antecedent to the millennium, and already here, will set aflame the whole of Europe as is prophesied in the Book of Daniel and in the Book (Revelation) of John. By 1917 kingdoms will fall and cataclysms will rock the earth."

A further interesting pronouncement of Abdul-Bahá was made in November of that year in Cincinnati when he is said to have foretold in the following words that America would be the instigator of the League of Nations:

"America is a noble nation, a standard bearer of peace throughout the world, shedding her light to all regions. Other nations are not untrammelled [sic] and free of intrigues like the United States , and are unable to bring about Universal Peace. But America, thank God, is at peace with all the world, and is worthy of raising the flag of brotherhood and International Peace. when the summons to International Peace is raised by America, all the rest o f the world will cry: `Yes, we accept.' The

nations of every clime will join in adopting the teachings of Bahaullah, revealed over fifty years ago. In His Epistles He asked the Parliaments of the world to send their best and wisest men to an international world-parliament that should decide all questions between the peoples and establish peace. then we shall have the Parliament of Man of which the prophets have dreamed."

After the World War and the acquisition of Palestine by the British Abdul-Bahá was knighted in 1920 by the British Government and given the designation K.B.E. He passed away in 1921.

The first Bahá'í missionary to America appears to have been Arab Ebrahim Khairullah who went to the United States about thirty years ago and made numerous converts at Chicago, which has remained the center of the American Bahá'ís since that time. He was later followed by a second Bahá'í missionary named Amirza Abdul Fazl who was accompanied by Ali Kuli Khan, Nabil-ed-Dowleh. The latter is doubtless known to the State Department as the Persian Charge d'Affaires in Washington responsible for the engagement in 1911 of the Schuster financial mission.

In addition to the United States where Bahá'ís have been most successful outside of Persia there have been considerable converts in Turkestan, India, Burmah, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and France.

Owing to the persecutions to which the Bahá'ís have been subjected in Persia, it is exceedingly difficult to estimate exactly their number here. They have been forbidden moreover by Baháullah to divulge the names of their fellow-Bahá'ís. It may be well however to quote so great an authority on Persia as Lord Curzon who, in his work "Persia and the Persian Question", published in 1892, the year of Baháullah's death, states:

"The lowest estimate places the present number of Babis in Persia at half a million. I am disposed to think, from conversations with persons well qualified to judge, that the total is nearer one million. They are to be found in every walk of life, from the ministers and nobles of the Court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Mussulman priesthood itself... If Babism continues to grow at its present rate of progression, a time may conceivably come when it will oust Mohammedanism from the field of Persia. This, I think, it would be unlikely to do, did it appear upon the ground under the flag of a hostile faith. But since its recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is

attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail."

Bahá'ísm is an eclectic religion, which can, in my opinion, lay little claim to originality. Its universal and all-embracing character has however been of great advantage in proselytizing among the Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians. This is expressed by Abdul-Bahá in the following words:

"It is not necessary to lower Abraham to raise Jesus. It is not necessary to lower Jesus to proclaim Baháullah. We must welcome the Truth of God wherever we behold it. The essence of the question is that all these great Messengers came to raise the Divine Standard of Perfections. All of them shine as orbs in the same heaven of the Divine Will. All of them give Light to the world."

The Bahá'ís have always contested the claim that their religion is primarily an oriental one and adapted only to the needs of Eastern peoples. In refutation of this opinion, Abdul-Bahá stated:

"As to the meaning of the cause of Baháullah, whatever has to do with the universal good is divine, and whatever is divine is for the universal good. If it be true, it is for all; if not, it is for no one; therefore a divine cause of universal good cannot be limited to either the East or the West, for the radiance of the Sun of Truth illumines both the East and the West, and it makes its heat felt in the South and in the North - there is no difference between one Pole and another. At the time of the Manifestation of Christ, the Romans a nd Greeks thought His Cause was especially was especially for the Jews. they thought they had a perfect civilization and nothing to learn from Christ's teachings, and by this false supposition many were deprived of His Grace. Likewise know that the principles of Christianity and the Commandments of Baháullah are identical and that their paths are the same.

Every day there is progress; there was a time when this divine institution (of progressive revelation) was in embryo, then new-born, then a child, then an intellectual youth;'

There is in Bahá'ísm a striking resemblance to Christian Science in the attitude of its adherents towards evil which they claim to be non-existent.

While there would appear to be little that is new in Bahá'ísm, it adheres to certain principles that have a ring of progress and modernity unknown to unreformed Islam. *These outstanding features are that:*

a. It is a religion of tolerance; Abdul-Bahá has said that "any religion which is not the cause of love and unity is no religion";

b. It advocates the complete emancipation and equality of women;

c. It espouses the cause of a universal language and calendar;

d. It advocates the establishment of a League of Nations, the realization of which was forecaste [sic] as early as 1875. Of the character of such a League, the Baháullah has to say:

"In such a universal treaty the limits of the borders and boundaries of every state should be fixed, and the customs and laws of every government; all the agreements and affaires of state and arrangements between the various governments should be propounded and settled in due form; the size of the armaments for each government should likewise be definitely agreed upon, because if in the case of any state there were to be an increase in the preparation for war, it would be a cause for alarm to the other states. The basis of this powerful alliance should be so fixed that, if one of the states afterwards broke any of the articles of it, the rest of the nations of the world would rise up and reduce it to submission. Yea, the whole human race would band its forces together to overthrow that government."

e. It has preached the limitation of armaments in the following words of Abdul-Bahá:

"By a general agreement all the governments of the world must disarm simultaneously. It will not do if one lays down its arms and the others refuse to do so. The nations of the world must concur with each other concerning this supremely important subject, so that they may abandon together the deadly weapons of human slaughter. As long as one nation increases her military and naval budget other nations will be forced into this crazed competition through their natural and supposed interests."

f. Though advocating non-resistance, it has consistently justified righteous warfare, of which Abdul-Bahá writes as follows:

"Even war is sometimes the great foundation of peace, and destroying is the cause of rebuilding. this war may be essentially attuned to the melodies of

peace; and then verily this fury is kindness itself, this oppression is the essence of justice and this war is the source of reconciliation. Today, the true duty of a powerful king is to promote universal peace; for verily this signifies the freedom of all the people of the world."

g. Finally, in discussing the struggle between capital and labor, Abdul-Bahá has advocated profit-sharing with the employees in order to prevent wasteful strikes and lockouts. With regard to the latter, while in Dublin, New Hampshire, in 1912, he spoke as follows:

"Now I want to tell you about the law of God. According to the divine law, employees should not be merely paid by wages. Nay, rather they should be partners in every work. The question of socialization is very difficult. It will not be solved by strikes for wages. All the governments of the world must be united, and organize an assembly, the members of which shall be elected from the parliaments and the noble ones of the nations. these must plan with wisdom and power, so that neither the capitalists suffer enormous losses nor the labourers become needy. In the utmost moderation they should make the law, then announce to the public that the rights of the working people are to be effectively preserved; also the rights of the capitalists are to be protected, when such a general law is adopted, by the will of both sides, should a strike occur, all the governments of the world should collectively resist it. Otherwise the work will lead to much destruction, especially in Europe. Terrible things will take place. One of the several causes of a universal European war will be this question. The owners of properties, mines and factories, should share their incomes with their employees, a nd give a fairly certain percentage of their profits to their working-men, in order that the employees should receive, besides their wages, some of the general income of the factory, so that the employee may strive with his soul in the work."

During the reign of Mozaffer-ed-Din, Baháullah prophesied in the following words the establishment of a Persian republic:

"Soon affairs will be changed in thee, and a republic of men shall rule over thee."

These words proved to be an effective weapon against the republican movement of 1924, and the accusation that the entire plan was a Bahá'í conspiracy was

frequently heard. This led to a denouncement of Sardar Sepah as a Bahá'í and to the secret publication of a falsified photograph of him wearing the portrait and insignia of Baháullah. Realizing the danger of such propaganda among the fanatic populace, the Prime Minister instigated the Shiah clergy of Karbela and Nejaf to present him with a portrait of the Imam Ali, as reported in the Legation's despatch No. 815 of December 26, 1924.

I have been informed by prominent Bahá'ís in Teheran that the Prime Minister secretly cherishes a high regard for the cause, but that, owing to political considerations, he dares not express himself. It is said that at the time when he was a simple Cossack on duty at the Roshanee hospital, a Bahá'í institution, he was greatly impressed by the kindliness and humanitarianism of the Bahá'í attendants which he has never forgotten.

Be that as it may, the fact is that he has permitted Bahá'í officers of unquestionable ability to rise to high rank in the army.

The outstanding of these are:

> *Colonel Shoa-ed-Din Khan Alai, Chief of Accounts, Ministry of War.*
>
> *Colonel Ataollah Khan Alai, recently returned to Teheran from France where he was sent with the delegation of Persian officers sent to Saint Cyr.*
>
> *Major Rahmatollah Khan Alai, Inspector.*
>
> *Major Rouhollah Khan, Special Adjutant to the War Minister.*

Owing to the fact that Bahá'ísm is a proscribed religion in this officially Islamic state, no professed Bahá'í can be a deputy in Parliament or act as a member of the Cabinet. The most prominent Bahá'ís moreover are inclined to adhere to the admonition of Baháullah that they withdraw entirely from political activity. Owing to the high moral qualities and ethical standards of the Bahá'ís in contrast with the orthodox Mohammedans, this withdrawal from public life is greatly to be regretted. ***Among the leading Bahá'ís outside the army are:***

Nabil-ed-Dowleh, Ali Kuli Khan, and Madam Moraveh-os-Saltaneh (an American).

Ezzatollah Khan Alai, Department of Accounts, Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs.

Valiollah Khan Vargha, First Drogman, Turkish Embassy

Azizollah Khan Vargha, farmer.

Hass an Khan Ahiai, Imperial Bank of Persia.

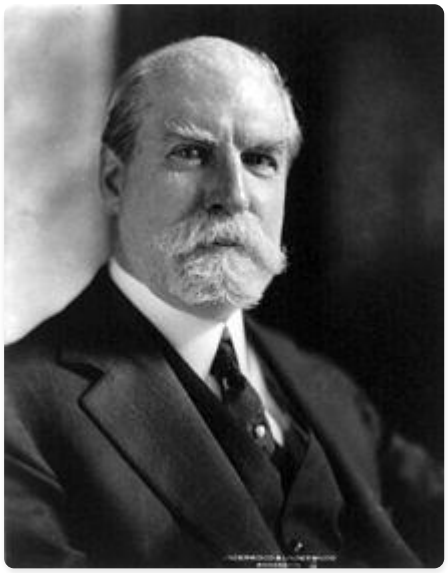
The Bahá'ís, who had placed great hopes in the former religious liberalism of the Prime Minister, have now lost all faith in him as a reformer. Since the collapse of the republican movement his defection from their cause has been complete, and he has left no stone unturned in order to integratiate [sic] himself with the corrupt Orthodox clergy. A recent evidence of this was his ostentatious visit to the holy shrines of Iraq after his campaign in Arabistan and his visit to the shrine of Sh'Abdul Azim outside Teheran before entering the city.

Even to the casual student of Islam it is obvious that Mohammedanism is in hopeless decay, more hopeless than was Catholicism before the Reformation. *If it is to be saved at all, there must arise an oriental reformer who will denounce the Islamic `indulgences' as did Luther the Papal ones.*

The disinterest of Bahá'ís, though in origin a Moslem sect, in the reform of Allah's faithful is a somewhat discouraging omen. Their striving for an all-expansive universality, though comprehensible, has so diluted their force in Persia as to diminish greatly their beneficent influence. One is constrained to remark that if they had concentrated less on Europe and America and more on morally bankrupt Persia their efforts would be more praiseworthy.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Islam, a Semitic religion that has never been adapted to Aryan needs as has Judaism through the teachings of Christ, has always remained a misfit on this light-hearted, imaginative Aryan people, who, to escape the yoke of the Caliphate, created that absurd schism called Shiism.

> *Failing therefore the ideal remedy for Persia's present religious decadence, namely a national renaissance of their great historic religion Zoroastrianism,* ***Bahá'ísm, in which there are signs of a Protestant Reformation, and which after all is of purely Persian origin, may prove itself to be the best solution under the circumstances.***
>
> *I have the honor to be, Sir,*
>
> *Your obedient servant,*
>
> *(signed) W. Smith Murray*



Comments

January 9. On this date in 1985, a Unitarian Universalist minister wrote "to express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection was not acceptable ..."

Original file: 0370.html (position #139)

January 9. On this date in 1985, a Unitarian Universalist minister "wrote to the spiritual assembly of the Bahá'ís of Wilmette, Illinois, to express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection [from the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.] was not acceptable and that, as he put it in his letter to the Assembly, he must read from "a world scripture such as the Holy Bible, or Koran, etc., or not at all." "How would you like," he wrote, "to be asked to participate in a world religion day and then be told that the host required you to read what he defined to be your scriptures, rather than you being able to read from what you felt represented your holy writings?""

On January 15, 1950, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States instituted the first celebration of World Religion Day to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting. World Religion Day is observed annually on the third Sunday in January.

On October 22, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago stated, "Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of **World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself.** Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States, **the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.**"

> *1710. World Religion Day, Purpose of*
>
> *Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of* ***World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself.*** *Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States,* ***the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.*** *In practice, there is no harm in the Bahá'í communities' inviting the persons of other religions to share their platforms on this Day,* ***providing the universality of the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfillment of the hopes of mankind for a universal religion are clearly brought forth.****"*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago, October 22, 1968)*

On April 11, 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of the U.S. about some of the restrictions on worship in a Bahá'í Temple, including prohibitions on congregational prayer, the presence of images, giving sermons, or the use of instruments.

> *2061. Worship in Temple*
>
> *"As regard the whole question of the Temple and services held in it: He wishes to emphasize that he is very anxious, now that this first and greatest Temple of the West has been built, and will, within a few years, be used for worship and regular services by the Bahá'ís, that no forms, no rituals, no set customs be introduced over and above the bare minimum outlined in the teachings. The nature of these gatherings is for prayer, meditation and the reading of writings from the Sacred Scriptures of our Faith and other Faiths; there can be one or a number of readers; any Bahá'í chosen, or even, non-Bahá'í, may read. The gatherings should be simple, dignified, and designed to uplift the soul and educate it through hearing the Creative Word. No speeches may be made, no extraneous matter introduced.*
>
> *"The use of pulpits is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh: if, in order to be more clearly heard, the person stands on a low platform, there is no objection, but this should not be incorporated as an architectural feature of the building....*
>
> *"Vocal music alone may be used and the position of the singers or singer is also a matter for your Assembly to decide; but again, there should be no fixed point, no architectural details marking a special spot. Acoustics should certainly be the main consideration in placing the singers."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 11, 1947: Insert with Bahá'í News, No. 232, June 1950)*

These prohibitions have often led to confusion and misunderstanding because the Temples are often represented as being "open to all religions," when in fact they are open to members of all religions, but certainly not to all religions.

You cannot have a Catholic mass, contemporary Christian worship, congregational Muslim salaat, or Hindu puja in the Bahá'í Temple.

On August 18, 2007, an article was written about "a Unitarian Universalist minister" who expressed "his feelings of frustration and offense" after having "been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship."

The article concerning the Unitarian minister's experience is as follows...

> *Saturday, August 18, 2007*
>
> *Unity - As We See It*
>
> *On January 9, 1985, the Rev. Tom Hansen,* ***a Unitarian Universalist minister****—I do not use his real name—wrote to the spiritual assembly of the Bahá'ís of Wilmette, Illinois, to* ***express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection was not acceptable and that, as he put it in his letter to the Assembly, he must read from "a world scripture such as the Holy Bible, or Koran, etc., or not at all."***
>
> ***"How would you like," he wrote, "to be asked to participate in a world religion day and then be told that the host required you to read what he defined to be your scriptures, rather than you being able to read from what you felt represented your holy writings?"***
>
> *The letter is a page-and-a-half of single-spaced type. It is pointed, challenging, and painful.*
>
> ***"I wonder if in clinging to decisions of Bahá'í leadership of decades ago you realize that you are denigrating other faiths in holding a world religious [sic] day and then not permitting your guest faiths to designate their readings to be what they call holy scriptures rather than going by your outmoded past? You are denying our beliefs, heritage, and scriptures, in saying, "We Bahá'ís have decided what is scriptural for you. We deny you the right, in our setting, to call scripture what you say is holy. You cannot read what is a true representation of your thinking in our world religious [sic] day. You are limited to what we Bahá'ís, or other authorities of the past century, call holy scripture. If you don't agree that we are right about what is scriptural for you, and read from those books we limit you to, then you are excluded from our service."***
>
> *The letter passed from the Wilmette spiritual assembly to Bruce Whitmore at the*

Bahá'í House of Worship. Whitmore contacted Rev. Hansen by phone and sent a follow-up letter of apology with a copy of his own book on the building of the House of Worship as a gift. Whitmore wrote in his letter, "Although it may not be possible for us to change the directives which govern our devotional services, be assured that we will make certain that neither we nor Bahá'í communities planning programs at the House of Worship offend any other religious community, even inadvertently."

Rev. Hansen read the book and delivered a sermon entitled "How the Bahá'ís Built their Temple." Then he wrote back to Mr. Whitmore on February 7. He quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Rúhíyyih Khánum from Mr. Whitmore's book to "suggest that your whole movement reexamine their position about limiting the readings allowed in the main room of the temple." He added his own emphasis to the quotes by underlining words and phrases such as unity, every, agreement, unfettered, all creeds, Unity of His Prophets, and Unity of Mankind. ***"Are you willing to hear from a Unitarian Universalist prophet," he challenged, "or are we for some reason not included in that unity. And are we a part of the unity of mankind, or not?" He closed the letter with a minor factual correction to Mr. Whitmore's book and thanks for Whitmore's "big spirited attitude."***

I found this correspondence while doing research at the U.S. Bahá'í National archives in Wilmette. It originally interested me because it illustrates, I believe, the dissonance between the public image of the Bahá'í Faith and the more insular, restrictive, and conservative practice of the Faith. The former understandably led Rev. Hansen to believe that "in truth there is no faith in this community closer to yours than the Unitarian-Universalist religion" (first letter, to Assembly); the latter leads me to think that beneath the surface the two are more opposite than alike.

The dissonance I want to look at now, though, is that between the feeling of accepting all faiths that the doctrine of progressive revelation gives so many Bahá'ís and the meaning which that doctrine has when expressed or acted on in an interfaith context.

In his book Music, Devotions, and Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (1987), R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram documents the transformation in American Bahá'í consciousness of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár from a place for Bahá'ís to worship

locally, as envisioned originally in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, to its role as "silent teacher." Armstrong-Ingram does not discuss the early American Bahá'ís' understanding of progressive revelation and how it influenced that process. But I suspect it did, because the House of Worship has come to be understood primarily as a physical and public means of relating to non-Bahá'ís religiously—naively so, I would say. In the last chapter of his book, Armstrong-Ingram quotes Hatcher and Martin:

At the present time, the houses of worship are not principally used for Bahá'í community services. Rather, they are opened as places where individuals of all religious backgrounds (or those professing no particular faith) meet in the worship of the one God. Services are nondenominational and consist of readings and prayers from the scriptures of the world's faiths, with no sermons or other attempts to cast these teachings in a mold of a specifically Bahá'í interpretation.

This passage deserves its own essay to unpack its multi-dimensional naiveté and self-deception; I quote it here simply as an example of the disappearance of the doctrinal assumptions underlying devotional practices at the House of Worship behind a claim of non-denominationality.

Progressive revelation is not just a belief in the shared divine origin of the world's religions, which is the aspect of the teaching that is built into the temple. *The general scheme of architecture that all Bahá'í houses of worship share—nine doors and nine sides—symbolizes unity. And the Wilmette House of Worship, in particular, sports the symbols of other major world religions cast into its decorative concrete exterior. The doctrine also includes the conception that God communicates episodically with humanity through perfect teachers. Their revelations have become the scriptures which are now the only accepted readings in the auditoriums of Bahá'í houses of worship. There is nothing neutral or nondenominational about this point of view; it is particularly Bahá'í, though some other faiths have related doctrines. How could Rev. Hansen and his rejected twentieth-century Unitarian writings fit into this scheme? As part of the human corruption and decline of the revelation of Christ and its disintegration into schism?*

So we find Mr. Whitmore caught between the directives for worship in the auditorium, which have their roots in this specifically Bahá'í concept of progressive revelation, and the desire to experience fellowship and unity with people of other

faiths. How, I wonder, did he think they would avoid offending "any other religious community, even inadvertently"? By not holding interfaith services in the Auditorium? By not inviting Unitarians? Making the rules clear up front might have helped. But the offense seems almost bound to have been repeated in some form, so long as the building continued to be seen by Bahá'ís as a place for all to worship—on Bahá'í terms.

I imagine the Bahá'ís involved were startled by Rev. Hansen's response. But the invitation they had issued was not really one to come together as equals and peers**—it couldn't be, because the rules governing the use of the auditorium had, and still have, a specific bias. **It was an invitation to participate in a Bahá'í conception of the oneness of religion. The Bahá'ís involved stumbled into this awkward situation because they believed they were doing one thing when in fact they were doing another.** Progressive revelation is not a bright, universally obvious umbrella under which all religions can happily gather; it is a doctrine of one particular religion. **Bahá'ís need to recognize its limitations as a basis for interfaith relationships.

*Seven years ago I moved away from the vicinity of the House of Worship, so I can't speak for any recent developments, except to praise the presence of Van Gilmer as music director. I do know, though, that **there has been a long history of frustration and dissatisfaction with devotional activity at the House of Worship.** I think that both Bahá'ís and people of other faiths will find more pleasure in worship there when the understanding of the place reverts to that originally intended by Bahá'u'lláh—a place for Bahá'ís to worship, though one with open doors.*

Also, judging at least from Armstrong-Ingram's book, a fresh engagement with Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings on the subject might yield a devotional practice more various and engaging than the one which has dominated the House of Worship's history.

It would also be more distinctively Bahá'í than the historical one. I think that would be a good thing.

Comments

January 9. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi sent an English message to the Bahá'ís of India "Remembering, however, the few among my friends in that land who are as yet unfamiliar with the Persian Tongue."

January 9. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi sent an English message to the Bahá'ís of India "Remembering, however, the few among my friends in that land who are as yet unfamiliar with the Persian Tongue."

> *The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout India and Burma, Care of the members of the Spiritual Assembly.*
>
> ...
>
> *January 9, 1923*
>
> *Beloved co-workers in the Vineyard of God!*
>
> *It has been my great pleasure and privilege to send you, since my return to the Holy Land, first my general message of confidence and of love addressed to all*

believers throughout the East, and later another letter wherein I appeal in particular to those faithful lovers of His Cause in that vast and distant dominion to labour whole-heartedly and to the very end for the diffusion of His Light and the spread of His Cause. Remembering, however, the few among my friends in that land who are as yet unfamiliar with the Persian Tongue, I have thought of sending these few lines to them in particular and through them to the rest of my brethren and sisters in those regions who, despite the diversity of tongue, of race and custom are all united at heart and animated by one common desire to uplift humanity and carry out his Divine Purpose for this world.

What an alluring field of service India with all its possibilities unfolds to our eyes at the present time and how vast are the opportunities of sowing the seeds of unity and loving kindness in the hearts of its divers peoples!

True, that land seems now unhappily to be plunged in the darkness of prejudice, hate and mistrust, yet however dark the immediate prospect may appear, our confidence remains unshaken that ere long these mists shall clear away, the dawn of a New Day shall break upon that land and the Rays of this Divine Revelation shall make of India a spiritually-quickened, peaceful and united country.

The universal Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh if declared and propounded with wisdom and judgement, determination, selflessness and sincerity, and above all if exemplified in our lives and dealings with our fellow-men, cannot fail to inspire and stimulate the mind of the enlightened seeker and win the admiration and allegiance of all mankind. Ours then is the duty and privilege to bring to the attention of this distressed and war-weary world this Message of Eternal Salvation and help to establish the Era of Peace and Brotherhood as purposed and foretold by Bahá'u'lláh.

The welcome news of the progress of the Third All India Bahá'í Convention as well as the favourable comment made upon it by the Press of that country have been fully shared with the pilgrims and resident friends in the Holy Land and we have all admired and rejoiced at the efforts you are exerting for the consolidation of the Movement in that ancient land.

May your endeavours in every sphere of your spiritual activities be crowned with brilliant success, that His glorious Promise regarding the future of that land may be speedily fulfilled. It is my earnest hope that "The Bahá'í News", the representative organ of the Bahá'í Community in India, may expand and develop,

may widen the sphere of its correspondence, add to the number and quality of its articles in Persian as well as in English, report regularly in its columns the news of the spiritual activities of all Bahá'í centres in India and elsewhere, and in general provide for the full, correct and dignified presentation of the Cause to the general public.

Assuring every one of you of my constant prayers on your behalf and wishing you success in your noble task,

I am your brother and co-worker,

Shoghi

Haifa, Palestine

Comments

January 9. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi appointed the International Bahá'í Council, with Charles Mason Remey as President of the Council. After Shoghi Effendi's death, Remey would put forth the claim that with this appointment , Shoghi Effendi had implicitly named him the second Guardian.

Original file: 0368.html (position #137)

January 9. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi appointed the International Bahá'í Council, with Charles Mason Remey as the president of the Council. After Shoghi Effendi's death, Mason Remey would put forth the claim that, by virtue of having named him President of the International Bahá'í Council, Shoghi Effendi had in fact implicitly named him as the second Guardian&oldid=745828715#After_Shoghi_Effendi) of the Bahá'í Faith.

Formation of First International Bahá'í Council Proclaim National Assemblies of East and West weighty epoch-making decision of formation of first International Bahá'í Council, forerunner of supreme administrative institution destined to emerge in fullness of time within precincts beneath shadow of World Spiritual Center of Faith already established in twin cities of 'Akká and Haifa. Fulfillment of prophecies uttered by Founder of Faith and Center of His Covenant culminating in establishment of Jewish State, signalizing birth after lapse of two thousand years of an independent nation in the Holy Land, the swift unfoldment of historic undertaking associated with construction of superstructure of the Báb's Sepulcher on Mount Carmel, the present adequate maturity of nine vigorously functioning national administrative institutions throughout Bahá'í World, combine to induce me to arrive at this historic decision marking most significant milestone in evolution of Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in course of last thirty years. Nascent Institution now created is invested with threefold function: first, to forge link with authorities of newly emerged State; second, to assist me to discharge responsibilities involved in erection of mighty superstructure of the Báb's Holy Shrine; third, to conduct negotiations related to matters of personal status with civil authorities. To these will be added further functions in course of evolution of this first embryonic International Institution, marking its development into officially recognized Bahá'í Court, its transformation into duly elected body, its efflorescence into Universal House of Justice, and its final fruition through erection of manifold auxiliary institutions constituting the World Administrative Center destined to arise and function and remain permanently established in close neighborhood of Twin Holy Shrines. Hail with thankful, joyous heart at long last the constitution of International Council which history will acclaim as the greatest event shedding luster upon second epoch of Formative Age of Bahá'í Dispensation potentially unsurpassed by any enterprise undertaken since inception of Administrative Order of Faith on morrow of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension, ranking second only to glorious immortal events associated with Ministries of the Three Central Figures of Faith in course of First Age of most glorious Dispensation of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle. Advise publicize announcement through Public Relations Committee.

--Shoghi

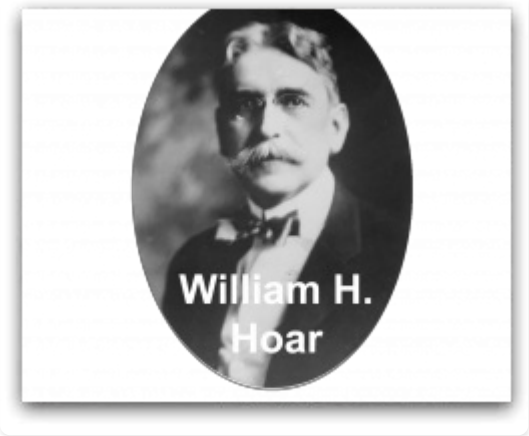
[Cablegram, January 9, 1951]

Comments

January 9. On this date in 1922, William Hoar, a Disciple of 'Abdu’l-Bahá and one of the first Americans to become a member of the Bahá’í Faith, died of myocarditis six weeks after hearing the news of 'Abdu’l-Bahá's death.

Original file: 0367.html (position #136)

January 9. On this date in 1922, William Hoar, a Disciple of 'Abdu’l-Bahá and one of the first Americans to become a member of the Bahá’í Faith, died of myocarditis six weeks after hearing the news of 'Abdu’l-Bahá's death.



Comments

January 9. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote the Conference of the Continental Board of Counsellors regarding the upcoming Five Year Plan of the worldwide Bahá'í community.

Original file: 0366.html (position #135)

January 9. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote the Conference of the Continental Board of Counsellors regarding the upcoming Five Year Plan of the worldwide Bahá'í community.

The Universal House of Justice 9 January 2001

To the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors

Dearly loved Friends,

Five years ago, we called on the body of Counselors assembled in the Holy Land to aid the Bahá'í world to understand and shoulder the challenges of systematic growth. The brilliant achievements of the Four Year Plan testify to the wholehearted response they made. Today, we ask for an equally great effort on your part, this time to ensure the successful launching of the Five Year Plan.

In your deliberations on the nature of this next stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan,

you need to take into account the magnitude of the changes occurring in the fortunes of the Faith. At the World Center, the raising of the great edifices now standing on the Arc represents a major step in the consolidation of a divinely appointed Administrative Order. The Four Year Plan witnessed a remarkable increase in the institutional capacity of Bahá'í communities in every continent. The evolution of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies has visibly accelerated, and Regional Councils, where they have been established, have brought a new energy and effectiveness to the work of the Cause. With the birth and efflorescence of more than 300 training institutes, the Faith now possesses a powerful instrument for developing the human resources needed to sustain large-scale expansion and consolidation. Further, the ability of the Bahá'í community to influence the course of human affairs, both through its dealings with governments and organizations of civil society and through its endeavors in social and economic development, has been greatly enhanced. The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh stands at the threshold of a new epoch, at a moment in history when, despite confusion and outbursts of fresh hostility, the world has made real strides towards peace. One clearly sees an increasing receptivity to His all-pervasive and resplendent Spirit.

Advancing the process of entry by troops will continue as the aim of the Five Year Plan—indeed the aim of the series of Plans that will carry the community to the end of the first century of the Formative Age. The acceleration of this vital process will be achieved through systematic activity on the part of the three participants in the Plan: the individual believer, the institutions, and the community.

The Training Institute

A searching analysis of the Four Year Plan recently prepared for us by the International Teaching Centre demonstrates that the training institute is effective not only in enhancing the powers of the individual, but also in vitalizing communities and institutions. The continued development of training institutes in the diverse countries and territories of the world, then, must be a central feature of the new Plan.

Drawing on the wealth of experience now accumulated in this area of endeavor, institutes will have to provide their communities with a constant stream of human resources to serve the process of entry by troops. Elements of a system that can meet the training needs of large numbers of believers have already been tested worldwide and have proven themselves. Study circles, reinforced by extension courses and special campaigns, have shown their ability to lend structure to the process of spiritual education at the grassroots. The value of a sequence of courses, each one following the other in a logical pattern and

each one building on the achievements of the previous ones, has become abundantly clear. Various models are emerging that provide insight into how such sequences can be used to create training programs. In one example the main sequence, much like the trunk of a tree, supports courses branching out from it, each branch dedicated to some specific area of training. In another, several tracks of courses, each with its own focus, run parallel. Institutes will do well to examine these elements and approaches and employ them in a manner that responds to the opportunities before them.

At the outset of the Twelve Month Plan we underscored the need for Bahá'í children to be nurtured spiritually and to be integrated into the life of the Cause. There is every indication from the response of the friends thus far that a raised awareness of the importance of child education will, in fact, be a hallmark of this brief yet significant Plan. A new impetus has been given to Bahá'í children's classes. Increased awareness has also brought to light opportunities to offer moral and spiritual education to children in general, as exemplified by the success of the efforts to introduce courses on the Bahá'í Faith into programs of official school systems.

That institutes are placing more and more emphasis on the training of teachers for children's classes is a particularly encouraging sign. Other measures are equally essential if regular classes for every age are to be offered in Bahá'í communities throughout the world. In some countries, national and regional committees have been established to assist Local Spiritual Assemblies in the discharge of their responsibility to educate children. In these, the relationship between the committees and the training institute will steadily evolve as experience is gained, each agency enhancing the work of the other. But there are many countries in which the institute is the only structure developing the capacity to organize and maintain courses in locality after locality. As this approach is working well with youth and adults, and increasingly for junior youth, there is no reason why the training institute should not also shoulder similar responsibility with respect to children, where necessary. As a general rule, institutes do not take on the administration of plans and programs for expansion and consolidation. Conducting children's classes, however, is a unique enterprise, of special urgency. In those countries where the task is given to it, the institute becomes a center of learning intensely engaged in the spiritual education of the friends from the tenderest age through adulthood.

Individual Initiative in Teaching

With the work of institutes growing in strength, attention has now to be given everywhere to systematizing teaching efforts. In the document "The Institution of the Counselors" just issued, we emphasize the role that the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants play

in helping the friends to meet this challenge, both at the level of individual initiative and of collective volition. As individuals progress through institute courses, they deepen their knowledge of the Faith, gain insights, and acquire skills of service. Some of the courses devoted to teaching will no doubt treat the subject in general terms. Others will focus on various means of sharing Bahá'u'lláh's message with specific segments of society, incorporating the wisdom gleaned from the teaching endeavors of the friends. This combined process of action, learning and training will endow communities with an ever-increasing number of capable and eager teachers of the Cause.

Training alone, of course, does not necessarily lead to an upsurge in teaching activity. In every avenue of service, the friends need sustained encouragement. Our expectation is that the Auxiliary Board members, together with their assistants, will give special thought to how individual initiative can be cultivated, particularly as it relates to teaching. When training and encouragement are effective, a culture of growth is nourished in which the believers see their duty to teach as a natural consequence of having accepted Bahá'u'lláh. They "raise high the sacred torch of faith," as was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wish, "labor ceaselessly, by day and by night," and "consecrate every fleeting moment of their lives to the diffusion of the divine fragrance and the exaltation of God's holy Word." So enkindled do their hearts become with the fire of the love of God that whoever approaches them feels its warmth. They strive to be channels of the spirit, pure of heart, selfless and humble, possessing certitude and the courage that stems from reliance on God. In such a culture, teaching is the dominating passion of the lives of the believers. Fear of failure finds no place. Mutual support, commitment to learning, and appreciation of diversity of action are the prevailing norms.

Systematic Programs of Growth

During the coming months, you will be helping national communities, whose circumstances differ widely, to formulate plans for systematic growth. There are many countries where increased institutional capacity, particularly at the level of the region, now makes it possible to focus attention on smaller geographic areas. Most of these will consist of a cluster of villages and towns, but, sometimes, a large city and its suburbs may constitute an area of this kind. Among the factors that determine the boundaries of a cluster are culture, language, patterns of transport, infrastructure, and the social and economic life of the inhabitants. The areas into which a region divides will fall into various categories of development. Some will not yet be open to the Faith, while others will contain a few isolated localities and groups; in some, established communities will be gaining strength through a vigorous institute process; in a few, strong communities of deepened believers

will be in a position to take on the challenges of systematic and accelerated expansion and consolidation.

Once the appropriate categories have been identified, national plans in these countries will need to make provision for the progressive opening of virgin areas through the settlement of homefront pioneers. Such goals can be met with relative ease if pioneers are experienced in institute programs and are able to use their methods and materials in raising up a group of dedicated believers who can carry the work of the Faith forward in the area. Precious indeed will be the privilege of those who, in the remaining years of the first century of the Formative Age, place their trust in God and arise with fervor to take the lead in carrying the light of Divine guidance to every part of their countries. It is our hope that this call for homefront pioneers will generate great enthusiasm among the friends and open before their eyes a new vista of possibilities to serve the Faith.

According to this scheme, national plans will also need to include provision for the strengthening of other areas which, although open to the Faith, have yet to reach the level of development that prepares them for intensive activity. In those areas where strong communities with a corps of deepened believers exist, systematic programs for the expansion and consolidation of the Faith should be established forthwith. We have already indicated that the International Teaching Centre has identified certain patterns of growth appropriate for relatively small geographical areas. Since then, it has analyzed several pilot projects in various parts of the world, and its findings are highly encouraging. The lessons learned now provide a body of experience for the launching of programs for systematic growth in area after area. As you consult on this matter with National Spiritual Assemblies and Regional Councils, you will want to keep the Teaching Center informed.

It is important that national communities not rush into establishing intensive programs in an area before conditions are propitious. These conditions include: a high level of enthusiasm among a sizeable group of devoted and capable believers who understand the prerequisites for sustainable growth and can take ownership of the program; some basic experience on the part of a few communities in the cluster in holding classes for the spiritual education of children, devotional meetings, and the Nineteen Day Feast; the existence of a reasonable degree of administrative capacity in at least a few Local Spiritual Assemblies; the active involvement of several assistants to Auxiliary Board members in promoting community life; a pronounced spirit of collaboration among the various institutions working in the area; and above all, the strong presence of the training institute with a scheme of coordination that supports the systematic multiplication of study circles.

Programs initiated in such areas should aim at fostering sustainable growth by building the

necessary capacity at the levels of the individual, the institution, and the community. Far from requiring grandiose and elaborate plans, these programs should focus on a few measures that have proven over the years to be indispensable to large-scale expansion and consolidation. Success will depend on the manner in which lines of action are integrated and on the attitude of learning that is adopted. The implementation of such a program will require the close collaboration of the institute, the Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, and an Area Teaching Committee.

At the core of the program must lie a sound and steady process of expansion, matched by an equally strong process of human resource development. A range of teaching efforts needs to be carried out, involving both activities undertaken by the individual and campaigns promoted by the institutions. As the number of believers in the area rises, a significant percentage should receive training from the institute, and their capabilities be directed towards the development of local communities.

Our message of 26 December 1995 delineating the features of the Four Year Plan made reference to the stages through which a community passes as it develops. The experience that has been gained in the ensuing years in working with communities at various stages will prove valuable to programs of growth. One of the first steps in implementing the program may well be a survey to determine the condition of each locality in the area. Among the initial goals for every community should be the establishment of study circles, children's classes, and devotional meetings, open to all the inhabitants of the locality. The observance of the Nineteen Day Feast has to be given due weight, and consistent effort should be made to strengthen the Local Spiritual Assemblies. Once communities are able to sustain the basic activities of Bahá'í life, a natural way to further their consolidation is to introduce small projects of social and economic development—for example, a literacy project, a project for the advancement of women or environmental preservation, or even a village school. As strength builds, the responsibility for an increasing number of lines of action is to be devolved onto the Local Spiritual Assemblies.

Throughout the endeavor, periodic meetings of consultation in the area need to reflect on issues, consider adjustments, and maintain enthusiasm and unity of thought. The best approach is to formulate plans for a few months at a time, beginning with one or two lines of action and gradually growing in complexity. Those who are actively involved in the implementation of plans, whether members of the institutions or not, should be encouraged to participate fully in the consultations. Other area-wide gatherings will also be necessary. Some of these will provide opportunity for the sharing of experience and further training. Others will focus on the use of the arts and the enrichment of culture. Together, such

gatherings will support an intense process of action, consultation and learning.

The friends who participate in these intensive programs of growth should bear in mind that the purpose is to ensure that the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh reaches the masses of humanity and enables them to achieve spiritual and material progress through the application of the Teachings. Vast numbers among the peoples of the world are ready, indeed yearn, for the bounties that Bahá'u'lláh alone can bestow upon them once they have committed themselves to building the new society He has envisioned. In learning to systematize their large-scale teaching work, Bahá'í communities are becoming better equipped to respond to this longing. They cannot withhold whatever effort, whatever sacrifice, may be called for.

A Spiritual Enterprise

Clearly, the scheme described here, while suitable to many national communities, cannot be applied in every situation. We count on the ability of the Bahá'í institutions to create plans which, if not reflecting the total scheme above, will incorporate elements of its vision, according to the circumstances of each national community. Bahá'í communities are, of course, engaged in a range of indispensable endeavors such as public information activity, proclamation efforts, external affairs work, production of literature, and complex social and economic development projects. Most certainly, as plans are devised, they will also address these challenges.

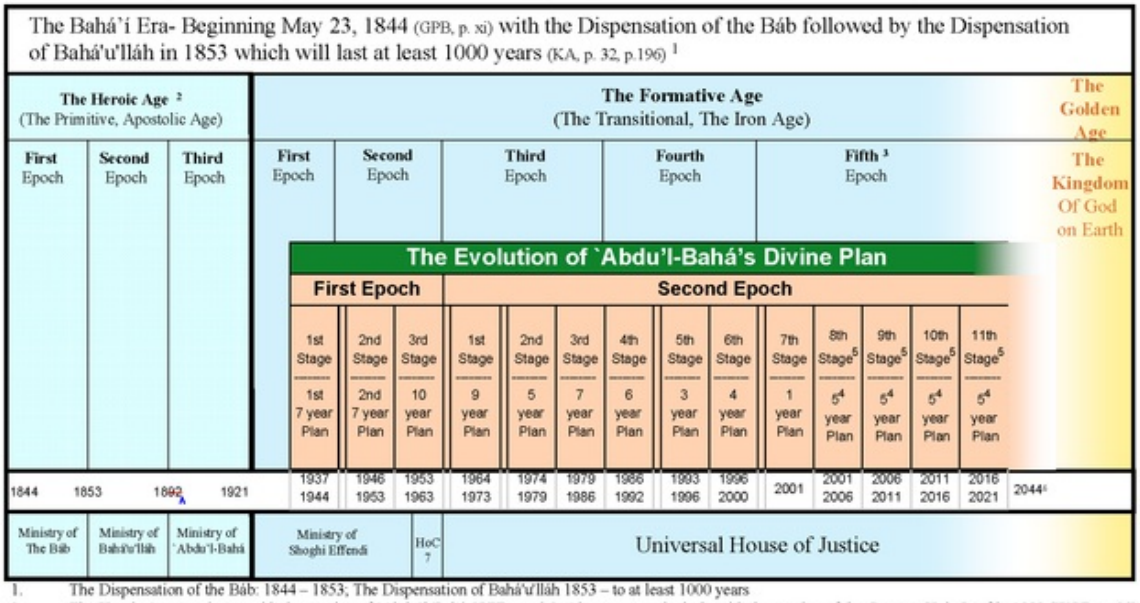
The nature of the planning process with which you will be helping the friends is in many ways unique. At its core it is a spiritual process in which communities and institutions strive to align their pursuits with the Will of God. The Major Plan of God is at work and the forces it generates impel humanity towards its destiny. In their own plans of action, the institutions of the Faith must seek to gain insight into the operation of these great forces, explore the potentialities of the people they serve, measure the resources and strengths of their communities, and take practical steps to enlist the unreserved participation of the believers. The nurturing of this process is the sacred mission entrusted to you. We have every confidence in your ability to achieve it. May Bahá'u'lláh bless and sustain you through His unfailing grace and mighty confirmations.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

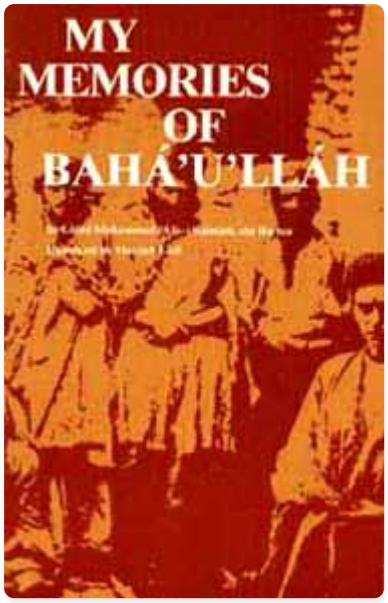
Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 9. On this date in 1983, Juan Cole wrote it was "... dishonest to delete passages from manuscripts when they are published, whether in the original or in translation, and no matter how temporarily" in regards to the deletion of "objectionable passages" in "My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh"

Original file: 0365.html (position #134)

January 9. On this date in 1983, Juan Cole wrote "that it is essentially dishonest to delete passages from manuscripts when they are published, whether in the original or in translation, and no matter how temporarily" in regards to the Universal House of Justice's deletion of "objectionable passages" in Ustad Salmani's *My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh* noting it "untimely and unwise" to publish passages where believers refer to him as "You being God, Uncle" and other "unpleasant and unworthy" stories.

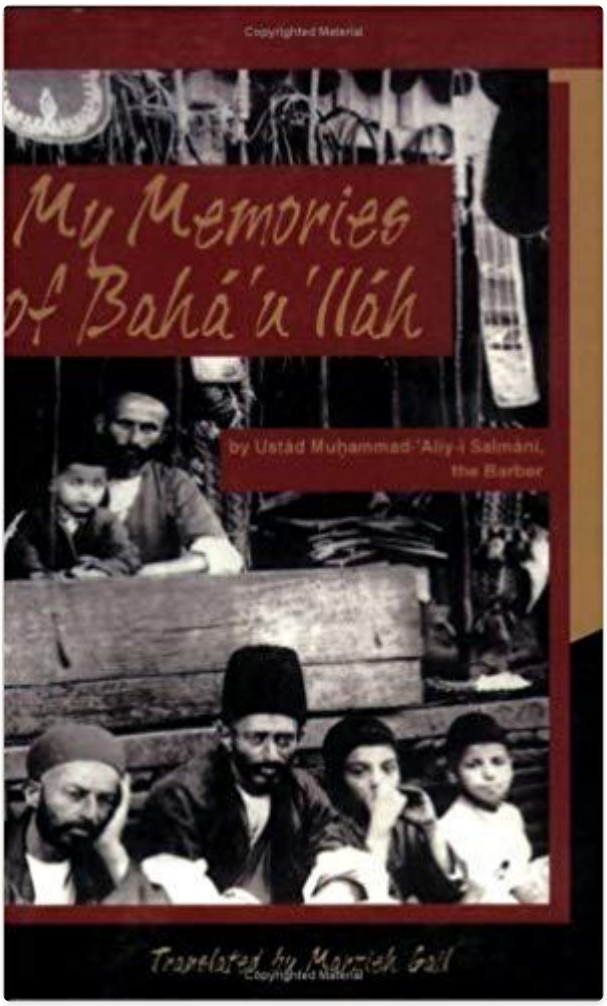


Comments

January 9. On this date in 1983, Juan Cole wrote it was "... dishonest to delete passages from manuscripts when they are published, whether in the original or in translation, and no matter how temporarily" in regards to the deletion of "objectionable passages" in "My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh"

Original file: 0364.html (position #133)

January 9. On this date in 1983, Juan Cole wrote "that it is essentially dishonest to delete passages from manuscripts when they are published, whether in the original or in translation, and no matter how temporarily" in regards to the Universal House of Justice's deletion of "objectionable passages" in Ustad Salmani's *My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh* noting it "untimely and unwise" to publish passages where believers refer to him as "You being God, Uncle" and other "unpleasant and unworthy" stories.


Copyrighted Material
My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh
by Ustád Muḥammad-'Alíy-i Salmání, the Barber
Translated by Marzieh Gail
Copyrighted Material

Comments

January 9. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "The unmarried homosexual is therefore in the same position as anyone else who does not marry.....by overcoming them we achieve our moral and spiritual development...God tests His servants."

Original file: 0363.html (position #132)

January 9. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The unmarried homosexual is therefore in the same position as anyone else who does not marry...Even though you feel that the conflict between sensuality and spirituality is more than you can bear, your affirmation--'I do know I am a Bahá'í' is a positive factor in the battle you must wage. Every believer needs to remember that an essential characteristic of this physical world is that we are constantly faced with trials, tribulations, hardships and sufferings and that by overcoming them we achieve our moral and spiritual development; that we must seek to accomplish in the future what we may have failed to do in the past; that this is the way God tests His servants and we should look upon every failure or shortcoming as an opportunity to try again and to acquire a fuller consciousness of the Divine Will and purpose."

1226. Recognizing the Divine Origin of the Sex Impulse in Man, Religion Teaches It Must Be Controlled

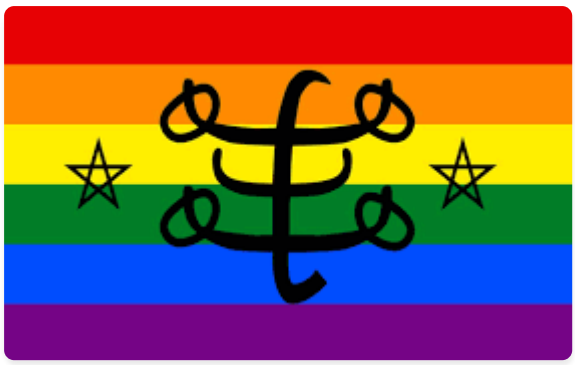
"...Any act or activity by a believer which is contrary to our teachings will surely be harmful to the spiritual future of the individual concerned, and may give non-Bahá'ís a wrong impression of the principles of our Faith. Whereas consider how important it is for a believer to reflect in his actions the redeeming features of the Cause he has embraced. Shoghi Effendi has pointed out:

'Not by the force of numbers, not by the mere exposition of a set of new and noble principles, not by an organized campaign of teaching--no matter how worldwide and elaborate in its character--not even by the staunchness of our faith or the exaltation of our enthusiasm, can we ultimately hope to vindicate in the eyes of a critical and sceptical age the supreme claim of the Abha Revelation. One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely, the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendour of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.'

"While recognizing the divine origin and force of the sex impulse in man, religion teaches that it must be controlled, and Bahá'u'lláh's law confines its expression to the marriage relationship. ***The unmarried homosexual is therefore in the same position as anyone else who does not marry.*** *The Law of God requires them to practise chastity.*

"Even though you feel that the conflict between sensuality and spirituality is more than you can bear, your affirmation--'I do know I am a Bahá'í' is a positive factor in the battle you must wage. Every believer needs to remember that an essential characteristic of this physical world is that we are constantly faced with trials, tribulations, hardships and sufferings and that by overcoming them we achieve our moral and spiritual development; that we must seek to accomplish in the future what we may have failed to do in the past; that this is the way God tests His servants and we should look upon every failure or shortcoming as an opportunity to try again and to acquire a fuller consciousness of the Divine Will and purpose."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 9, 1977)



Comments

January 9. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi announced "Fulfillment of prophecies uttered by Founder of Faith and Center of His Covenant culminating in establishment of Jewish State, signalizing birth after lapse of two thousand years of an independent nation in the Holy Land."

Original file: 0362.html (position #131)

January 9. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi announced the "formation of first International Bahá'í Council" and "Fulfillment of prophecies uttered by Founder of Faith and Center of His Covenant culminating in establishment of Jewish State, signalizing birth after lapse of two thousand years of an independent nation in the Holy Land."

> *Formation of First International Bahá'í Council*

> *Proclaim National Assemblies of East and West weighty epoch-making decision of formation of first International Bahá'í Council, forerunner of supreme administrative institution destined to emerge in fullness of time within precincts beneath shadow of World Spiritual Center of Faith already established in twin cities of 'Akká and Haifa. Fulfillment of prophecies uttered by Founder of Faith and Center of His Covenant culminating in establishment of Jewish State, signalizing birth after lapse of two thousand years of an independent nation in the Holy Land, the swift unfoldment of historic undertaking associated with construction of superstructure of the Báb's Sepulcher on Mount Carmel, the present adequate maturity of nine vigorously functioning national administrative institutions throughout Bahá'í World, combine to induce me to arrive at this historic decision marking most significant milestone in evolution of Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in course of last thirty years. Nascent Institution now created is invested with threefold function: first, to forge link with authorities of newly emerged State; second, to assist me to discharge responsibilities involved in erection of mighty superstructure of the Báb's Holy Shrine; third, to conduct negotiations related to matters of personal status with civil authorities. To these will be added further functions in course of evolution of this first embryonic International Institution, marking its development into officially recognized Bahá'í Court, its transformation into duly elected body, its efflorescence into Universal House of Justice, and its final fruition through erection of manifold auxiliary institutions constituting the World Administrative Center destined to arise and function and remain permanently established in close neighborhood of Twin Holy Shrines. Hail with thankful, joyous heart at long last the constitution of International Council which history will acclaim as the greatest event shedding luster upon second epoch of Formative Age of Bahá'í Dispensation potentially unsurpassed by any enterprise undertaken since inception of Administrative Order of Faith on morrow of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension, ranking second only to glorious immortal events associated with Ministries of the Three Central Figures of Faith in course of First Age of most glorious Dispensation of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle. Advise publicize announcement through Public Relations Committee.*
>
> *--Shoghi*
>
> *[Cablegram, January 9, 1951]*

On May 14, 1948, the same day as David Ben Gurion's declaration of the State of Israel,

1948, the Arab village of al-Nuqayb, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had owned land and grown grain, was depopulated in the fighting which broke out after the U.N. General Assembly's adoption on November 29, 1947 of the Partition Plan for Palestine.

Al-Nuqayb (transliterated as Nughayb in the Bahá'í orthography) is mentioned in Lady Blomfield's *The Chosen Highway*, in the sectioned titled *Bahá'í Villages*.

> *The Master bought from time to time some land in various villages. Asfiya and Daliya, near Haifa--these two properties He bestowed upon Diya'u'llah and Badi'u'llah, the two younger half-brothers, at the request of Bahá'u'lláh.*
>
> *Land was also acquired in the villages of Samrih, Nughayb, and 'Adasiyyih, situated near the Jordan.*

In his book *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, the historian Walid Khalidi details the history of many of these Palestinian villages and how they were depopulated. For example, he notes that in the 1880s most of the village land of al-Samra was purchased by the Bahá'u'lláh, with the villagers continuing to farm as tenant farmers. In the 1920s, this land was sold by Shoghi Effendi to the Jewish National Fund.

Bahá'í Villages in *The Chosen Highway* chronicles in some detail how 'Abdu'l-Bahá used the grain he had grown in these villages to supply the British Army during World War I.

> *We learned that when the British marched into Haifa there was some difficulty about the commissariat. The officer in command went to consult the Master.*
>
> *"I have corn," was the reply.*
>
> *"But for the army?" said the astonished soldier.*
>
> *"I have corn for the British Army," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*
>
> *He truly walked the Mystic way with practical feet. [footnote: Lady Blomfield often recounted how the corn pits proved a safe hiding-place for the corn, during the occupation of the Turkish army. -Ed.]*

According to Harry Charles Luke, an official in the British Colonial Office who served as assistant Governor of Jerusalem,

> *Sir 'Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l Baha had travelled extensively in Europe and America to expound his doctrines, and on the 4th December, 1919, was created by King George V a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the Occupation.*

On April 27, 1920, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ceremonially knighted, an event which was prominently reported in the Bahá'í periodical *Star of the West*.

> *THE following beautiful description of this event was written by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi who was at that time in Haifa: "Among the kings and governments of the world who have become convinced that Abdul Bahá was the well-wisher and the lover of mankind are King George and his government. The King sent a medal to Abdul Bahá with the title, "Sir", thus making him a member of his household. On the 27th of April, 1920, the Governor and high officials of Haifa, Palestine presented in a beautiful garden* ***a most wonderful celebration for the knighting of Abdul Baha.*** *Bahai pilgrims from Persia, America and all parts of the world were present. Mohammedan, Christian, Jewish leaders, clergymen, notables and local officials from Haifa, Acca and other towns attended. A tent was pitched in the center of the garden.* ***English troops stood on both sides, from the gate of the garden to the center where Abdul Bahá was seated.*** *The military music added wonderful melody to the rustling leaves of the beautiful trees. The breezes of the spring on that sunny afternoon imparted a remarkable vigor to the physical body just as the presence of Abdul Baha strengthened the souls. The Governor stood behind Abdul Bahá and, after a short speech, interpreted by Mr. Wadie Bistani, presented the medal. Then Abdul Baha, rising from his seat, gave a brief talk and a prayer for the British government.*

On February 23, 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, a member of the Rothschild banking family who was a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips to Palestine.

On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement, proclaiming that "There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi was matriculated at Balliol College. In a letter to Marzieh Gail, Shoghi Effendi outlined his educational ambitions at Balliol College, specifically to study with eminent professors and Orientalists, noting alumni who were all Imperialists.

After 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi would continue to have close relations with the leading political administrators and prominent Zionist leaders. For example, on January 24, 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*. As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

> *While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:*
>
> > *Dear Mr. Rabbani,*
> >
> > *I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in*

> *Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.*
>
> *Yours sincerely,*
>
> *Herbert Samuel*

Comments

January 9. On this date in 1914, John Ferraby, a Custodian, was born. His "All Things Made New" is notable for the changes made to it: The dedication of the book to "The First Guardian" changed to simply "The Guardian", references to "the Guardian" replaced with "the Universal House of Justice."

Original file: 0361.html (position #130)

January 9. On this date in 1914, John Ferraby, a Hand of the Cause of God and from 1959 to 1963 one of the nine Custodians, was born. He wrote *All Things Made New*, which is notable for the changes made from the original publication in 1957 to subsequent editions published after the death of Shoghi Effendi. For example, comparing the original 1957 edition to the 1987 edition, among the numerous alterations, is the replacement of his dedication of the book to "The First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith" to simply "The Guardian." Other references to "the Guardian" have been replaced with "the Universal

House of Justice."

Born in Southsea, England, into a Jewish family, he was educated at Malvern College and King's College, Cambridge. He became a Bahá'í in 1941 and was elected as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, which he remained until 1959. In October 1957, Ferraby was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi. From 1959 to 1963, he served as one of the nine Custodians at the Bahá'í World Centre.

In 1941 that he was told about the Faith by a non-Bahá'í. Wanting to know more, he found John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* in a public library. John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Ferraby was by then living in London, so he started to look for the Bahá'ís there, but he had difficulty in finding them because during the blitz, the Bahá'í Centre was empty most of the time. However, finally he found someone and after a couple of visits he wanted to be accepted as a member of the community. Almost imediately he began to work for the Faith, becoming in less then an year a member of the London Spiritual Assembly and of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles. In 1943 he married a fellow member of the National Assembly, Dorothy Cansdale.

In 1946 he became secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, working at first in his spare time and from 1950 as full-time secretary. This work he continued, living in the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in London from December 1954, until he went to serve in the Holy Land at the end of 1959. During a good deal of the time he was also manager of the British Bahá'í Publishing Trust, as well as being an active teacher and committee member. From 1951 to 1956 he was busily involved in the work of the Africa Committee and during the opening of the various territories in Africa, at that time mostly colonies or protectorates, he attended to most of the government relationship, acting in his capacity of national secretary. He attended the first Intercontinental Conference, held in Kampala, Uganda, in 1958, as well as the successive Intercontinental Conferences which were held in Europe.

In January 1955, he made the Bahá'í pilgrimage. While in Haifa, Shoghi Effendi advised him to write his book *All Things Made New*. The book has been widely used, running to one edition of the British Isles and three in the United States. *All Things Made New*, which is notable for the changes made from the original publication in 1957 to subsequent editions

published after the death of Shoghi Effendi. For example, comparing the original 1957 edition to the 1987 edition, among the numerous alterations, is the replacement of his dedication of the book to "The First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith" to simply "The Guardian." Other references to "the Guardian" have been replaced with "the Universal House of Justice."

In 1957, Shoghi Effendi named Ferraby in the last group of Hands of the Cause. He carried a big share of the work and responsibility for the arrangements when Shoghi Effendi died and was buried in London. After that he took part in the gathering of the Hands of the Cause in Haifa and stayed on there for over three months to help. In December 1959, John went to live in Haifa as one of the Hands of the Cause resident in the Holy Land and remained there until Riḍván 1963. After that he returned to England and lived in Cambridge for the last ten years of his life, working for the first few years as one of the Hands of the Cause in the continent of Europe, dealing with their secretariat and traveling a good deal. Later it became no longer possible for him to serve in this way.

He died on September 5, 1973.

Comments

January 10. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences took place, one in Toronto, Canada, and another in Guadalajara, Mexico.

January 10. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Toronto, Canada, and another in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in

good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual

election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Comments

January 10. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The instructions that accompany these prayers…have been definitely ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, and as such should be entirely and confidently carried out by the believers, and particularly by the Bahá’í youth…"

Original file: 0359.html (position #128)

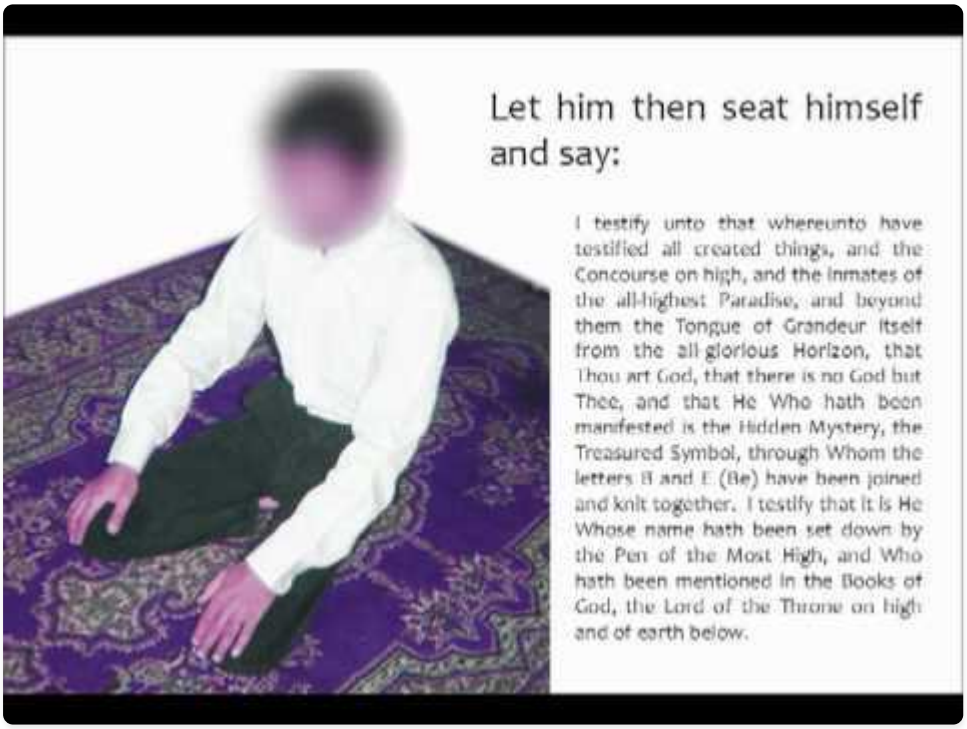
January 10. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The instructions that accompany these prayers, such as the washing of hands and face, of bowing down and of raising one's hands, have been definitely ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, and as such should be entirely and confidently carried out by the believers, and particularly by the Bahá’í youth on whose shoulders has been laid the chief responsibility of vindicating the truth, and preserving the integrity of the laws and ordinances of the Faith."

The instructions that accompany these prayers, such as the washing of hands and face, of bowing down and of raising one's hands, have been definitely ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, and as such should be entirely and confidently carried out by the believers, and particularly by the Bahá'í youth on whose shoulders has been laid the chief responsibility of vindicating the truth, and preserving the integrity of the laws and ordinances of the Faith.

The daily obligatory prayers are three in number. The shortest one consists of a single verse which has to be recited once every twenty-four hours and at mid-day. The medium which begins with the words "The Lord is witness that there is none other God but He" has to be recited three times a day, in the morning, at noon and in the evening. This prayer is accompanied by certain physical acts and gestures. The long prayer, which is the most elaborate of the three, has to be recited only once in every twenty-four hours, and at any time one feels inclined to do so.

The believer is entirely free to choose any one of these three prayers, but is under the obligation of reciting either one of them, and in accordance with any specific directions with which they may be accompanied.

(To a National Spiritual Assembly, dated 10 January 1936)


Let him then seat himself and say:
I testify unto that whereunto have testified all created things, and the Concourse on high, and the inmates of the all-highest Paradise, and beyond them the Tongue of Grandeur itself from the all glorious Horizon, that Thou art God, that there is no God but Thee, and that He Who hath been manifested is the Hidden Mystery, the Treasured Symbol, through Whom the letters B and E (Be) have been joined and knit together. I testify that it is He Whose name hath been set down by the Pen of the Most High, and Who hath been mentioned in the Books of God, the Lord of the Throne on high and of earth below.

Comments

January 10. On this date in 2006, an individual wrote the NSA of the U.S. regarding "its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press" which it said "include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith."

Original file: 0358.html (position #127)

January 10. On this date in 2006, an individual wrote the NSA of the U.S. regarding "its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press" which it said was "in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books over the years that include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith."

Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly to an individual, January 2006

January 30, 2006

Dear Baha´'i´ Friend,

The National Spiritual Assembly has received your email messages of December 31, 2005 and January 10, 2006 and appreciates the concerns you have shared in response to its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press. First, we wish to assure you that the National Assembly has no issues with your titles ____. As you state, the manuscripts for these books were properly submitted to the National Assembly for literature review and subsequently passed.

Our decision to cease to distribute books and other items handled by Kalima´t Press was reached, as indicated in our December 29, 2005 letter to all Local Spiritual Assemblies, not so much because of any specific titles but rather in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books over the years that include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith. *You have, in your own letter, given a good assessment of the problems inherent in such action. However, continued support of Kalima´t Press under these circumstances, through distribution of its products, would be illogical and contradictory to the principles and purposes of a Baha´'i´ institution.*

Regarding your suggestion that the National Assembly identify for the friends those titles that it finds inimical to the interests of the Faith, we are sure you will appreciate upon reflection that we are not interested in creating a list of banned books. ***As to the distribution of those titles of which the Assembly approves, this has been the approach for a number of years and has only emboldened and enabled Kalima´t Press to carry more harmful titles.*** *Individuals are entirely free to purchase any books and other items they choose through Kalima´t Press or any other publisher or distributor. The National Assembly has simply taken the step of terminating institutional support of a company that has for many years exhibited a disregard for the repeated guidance and admonishments of Baha´'i´ institutions to disengage itself from affiliation with and promotion of material that harms the Faith to which it professes allegiance.*

The National Assembly appreciates the seriousness of its decision and assures you

> *that it was not taken precipitously. We regret the distress this action has caused you and your family, but we are confident that the steps you have already initiated to ameliorate this immediate challenge and your steadfast allegiance to the institutions of the Faith will in the end provide resolution and attract the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty.*
>
> *You and your family are lovingly remembered in our prayers. May your every devoted endeavor on behalf of the glorious Cause of the Blessed Beauty be divinely assisted and abundantly confirmed.*
>
> *With loving Baha´i´ greetings,*
>
> *[National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States]*

Comments

January 10. On this date in 1978, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Germany "if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it."

Original file: 0357.html (position #126)

January 10. On this date in 1978, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Germany "if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it."

> *642. Cremation is Contrary to Bahá'í Law--Bahá'í Relatives and the Spiritual Assembly Are Responsible*

> *"As was explained to your Assembly in a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice on 10 January 1978, if a Bahá'í makes a provision in his will that is contrary to Bahá'í law, that provision is null and void in Bahá'í law, and neither the Bahá'í relatives nor the Spiritual Assembly are permitted to fulfil it. Thus, if a Bahá'í states in his will that his remains are to be cremated he should, nevertheless, be buried in accordance with Bahá'í law unless there is some element of the civil law would prevent such an occurrence--in which case the civil law would have to be followed, but the Assembly, as indicated above, could take no part in it...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, December 9, 1984)*

Comments

January 10. On this date in 1988, the UHJ published a memorandum regarding Táhirih and women's suffrage. An influential Bábi theologian, she abandoned and shunned most of her family, stating "He, in that he rejects God's religion, is unclean; between us there can be naught in common."

Original file: 0356.html (position #125)

January 10. On this date in 1988, the UHJ published a memorandum regarding Táhirih and women's suffrage. An influential Bábi theologian, she abandoned and shunned most of her family, stating "He, in that he rejects God's religion, is unclean; between us there can be naught in common."

Martha Root also authored a number of works, including one about Táhirih, titled *Táhirih the Pure*, wherein she notes...

> *The question of her returning to her husband arose, and this she absolutely refused to do. Try as they might, she would not consent to be reconciled with her husband, Mullá Muhammad. She gave as her reason: "He, in that he rejects God's religion, is unclean; between us there can be naught in common."*

Fatimah Baraghani, later known as Qurrat al-Ayn (Consoloation of the Eyes) and Tahirih (the Pure One), was an influential Bábi theologian.

Her interpretation of the Báb's message was considered radical by many of his other believers, including Mullá Muḥammad 'Alí-i-Bárfurúshi, also known as Quddús, who was the most prominent disciple of the Báb and the eighteenth and final Letter of the Living who accused her of "heresy." Among her theological contributions was that she "wedded the messianic message to the figure of al-Bab." and "her rise to leadership aptly characterized the messianic ethos around which the entire Bábi movement was formed."

She abandoned and shunned most of her family.

From *The Master's Last Tablet to America* in *Bahá'í World Faith—Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*...

> *Likewise Qurratu'l-'Ayn, who is celebrated in all the world, when she believed in God and was attracted to the Divine Breaths, she forsook her two eldest sons, although they were her two oldest children, because they did not become believers, and thereafter did not meet them. She said: "All the friends of God are my children, but these two are not. I will have nothing to do with them."*

And from Martha Root's *Táhirih the Pure*...

> *The question of her returning to her husband arose, and this she absolutely refused to do. Try as they might, she would not consent to be reconciled with her husband, Mullá Muhammad. She gave as her reason: "He, in that he rejects God's religion, is unclean; between us there can be naught in common."*

Táhirih has become the object of hagiographic work, including numerous biographies, poems, songs, choreographed dances, and paintings. The Tahirih Justice Center is named after her.

Tahirih and Women's Suffrage by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice published in Bahá'í Studies Bulletin, 4:2 1990-01 first written or published 1988 1. Letter and Memorandum #1 1a. Letter #1 Department of the Secretariat 10 January 1988 Mr. Hari Docherty

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice referred to the Research Department your letter of 1 December 1987 concerning a letter in which you understood that Shoghi Effendi had stated that women's suffrage was not part of Táhirih's concept. We are now directed to send you the enclosed copy of a memorandum, prepared by that Department in response.

The House of Justice hopes that a study of this comprehensive memorandum will enhance your understanding of the exalted station of Táhirih and the extent of her influence on the emancipation of women and the ultimate achievement of peace.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, For Department of the Secretariat 1b. Memorandum accompanying letter #1 M E M O R A N D U M To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 10 January 1988 From: The Research Department The Research Department has studied the questions raised by Mr. Hari Docherty in his letter of 1 December 1987 to the Universal House of Justice. Mr. Docherty refers to a letter of the Guardian which states that woman's suffrage was not part of the concept of Táhirih. He requests a copy of this letter and expresses the view that the association of woman's suffrage with Táhirih appears to originate with a book about her life by a Western woman, the idea later being picked up and given credence in "God Passes By". Mr. Docherty also expresses concern that many Bahá'í women put Táhirih before the Greatest Holy Leaf. We provide the following comment.

1. Letter about Táhirih

While the Research Department has been unable to locate a letter in which Shoghi Effendi stated that "women's suffrage was not part of her [Táhirih's] concept", the following extract from a letter dated 5 November 1949 written on behalf of the Guardian to a group of believers involved in arranging radio broadcasts in Latin America, may well be the one that Mr. Docherty had in mind. The relevant section of this letter states:

He feels that the projected radio broadcasts are of the utmost importance as they afford you an opportunity of bringing to many listeners a sense of the greatness of the Cause. In this connection he has some advice to give you: You should stick carefully to facts and beware of putting any interpretations of facts into it. Your best sources are Nabil's Narrative and Martha Root's book on Tahirih, as far as she is concerned, and, of course the general literature of our Faith. The Guardian advises you not to introduce into a series for public consumption anything obscure or mystical. By all means avoid the scene in the Presence of Bahá'u'lláh between Tahirih and Quddus. Her separation from her husband and children, her teaching in Baghdad, her imprisonment and death, and her poems, sake a beautiful and moving tale. He would not call her the first suffragette, for this certainly was strictly speaking no part of her concept. It is interesting to note that it is not correct to regard Táhirih as "the first suffragette". Indeed, the term "suffragette", meaning one who militantly agitates for the extension of the right to vote to women, would appear to be a misnomer when applied to Táhirih. A review of the outstanding accomplishments of her life of service to the Cause, contained in "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 72-77, clearly indicates that the direct advocacy of suffrage for her sex was "strictly speaking no part of her concept".

While Táhirih cannot be regarded as the "first suffragette", she is described by the Guardian as the "first woman suffrage martyr" in "God Passes By", p. 75. From the context, it appears that though Táhirih was not actively and directly involved in advocating woman's suffrage, by proclaiming the advent of the New Day with its values of peace and unity, by transcending cultural constraints, by active involvement in the dramatic Conference at Badasht. She was participating in the initiation of a process that was to bring about a revolutionary transformation in human society, a transformation which, given further impetus by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, would, among other things, lead to the emancipation of women and include the right of women to vote and to participate in social decision-making. Her martyrdom served to underline the importance of the new Revelation and to stimulate interest in the situation of women.

1. Woman's suffrage

Mr. Docherty hazards the guess that the connection between Táhirih and woman's suffrage may have been introduced into the Faith by a Western woman and then amplified by Shoghi Effendi in "God passes By". While it is possible that a Western author helped to popularize the contribution of Táhirih to the cause of women, as mentioned in (1.) above, the link between Tahirih and woman's suffrage derives from her espousal of spiritual values which initiated a process of fundamental social change.

With regard to the concept of woman's suffrage, it is the view of the Research Department that woman's suffrage must be considered within the framework of the practice of the principle of the equality of men and women. The principle of equality is clearly articulated in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (See the Compilation on Women.) Furthermore, there are numerous Tablets dealing with this subject which were revealed by the Master prior to His travels in the West.

With regard to the rights of women, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated:

Women have equal rights with men upon earth; in religion and society they are a very important element. The Master characterized woman's suffrage as one of these "rights". For example, He indicated:

At the time of elections the right to vote is the inalienable right of women... 'Abdu'l-Bahá also makes woman's suffrage a prerequisite to the attainment of universal peace. He stated:

Another fact of equal importance in bringing about international peace is woman's suffrage. That is to say, when perfect equality shall be established between men and women, peace may be realized for the simple reason that womankind in general will never favor warfare. Women will not be willing to allow those whom they have so tenderly cared for to go to the battlefield. When they shall have a vote, they will oppose any cause of warfare. The Universal House of Justice in its Peace Statement reaffirmed the importance of the full emancipation of women to the achievement of peace.

1. The station of Táhirih

Mr. Docherty expresses concern that some of the friends give greater importance to Táhirih than to the Greatest Holy Leaf. In "God Passes By", p. 33, Táhirih is described as "the noblest of her sex in that [Babi] Dispensation".

In "Messages to the Bahá'í World" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 74, the Guardian describes the Greatest Holy Leaf as "ranking as foremost among the members of her sex in the Bahá'í Dispensation". And, in "God Passes By", he states that she is:

...comparable in rank to those immortal heroines such as Sarah, Asiyih, the Virgin Mary, Fatimih and Tahirih, each of whom has outshone every member of her sex in previous Dispensations. Thus Táhirih and the Greatest Holy Leaf are each described as being pre-eminent in her particular Dispensation. It is therefore apparent that both are worthy of the high regard of the believers.

1. Letter and Memorandum #2 2a. Letter #2 Department of the Secretariat 16 March 1988 Mr. Hari Docherty

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your letter of 12 February 1988, in which you clarify the points raised in your letter of 1 December 1987, a copy of which is enclosed as you have requested, has been received by the Universal House of Justice and referred to the Research Department. The House of Justice warmly commends your insistence on accuracy in presenting any aspect of the teachings or history of the Faith, and applauds your obvious commitment to the cause of the advancement of women.

In sending for your study the enclosed copy of the further memorandum, and its attachments, on the topic of Táhirih, prepared by the Research Department, the House of Justice trusts that the issues that remained unanswered earlier will be satisfactorily addressed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, Enclosures 2b. Memorandum accompanying letter #2 M E M O R A N D U M To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 16 March 1988 From: The Research Department The Research Department has considered the issues raised by Mr. Hari Docherty in his letter dated 12 February 1988 to the Universal House of Justice. Mr. Docherty explains that Dr. Denis MacEoin stated in a talk he gave some years ago at a Summer School, that Táhirih's association with women's suffrage originated with a book by a Western woman, and that, while the words of Táhirih to the effect that: "You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women", might have the right ring in English, they were not credible within the context of 19th century Persian culture. We provide the following comment.

1. Táhirih and Woman's Suffrage

The Research Department has not been able to locate conclusive evidence which supports the idea that Táhirih's association with woman's suffrage originated with a book by a Western woman. It is our view, as was stated in our memorandum of 10 January 1988, that Táhirih, by proclaiming the advent of the New Day with its values of peace and unity, by transcending cultural constraints, by active involvement in the dramatic Conference at Badasht, was participating in the initiation of a process that was to bring about a revolutionary transformation in human society, a transformation which, given further impetus by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, would, among other things, lead to the emancipation of women. The link between Táhirih and woman's suffrage derives, then, in

the first instance, from her espousal of spiritual values which initiated a process of fundamental social change.

In “God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), Shoghi Effendi stresses the impact of Táhirih's life in the West. He wrote:

...the fame of this immortal woman was noised abroad, and traveling with remarkable swiftness as far as the capitals of Western Europe, aroused the enthusiastic admiration and evoked the ardent praise of men and women of divers nationalities, callings and cultures.... Western authors, inspired by the "wondrous story of her life", no doubt helped to popularize the contribution of Táhirih to the cause of women. The tributes to Táhirih from some of these writers are recorded in "God Passes By", on pp. 76-77.

1. Words of Táhirih

With regard to the authenticity of the words of Táhirih to the effect that "You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women", Mr. Docherty draws attention to an extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in Martha Root's book, “Táhirih the Pure", rev. ed. (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1981), p. 98, which cites these same words. He requests a copy of this Tablet.

We enclose extracts from a talk delivered by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá at a meeting of the Women's Freedom League in London in January 1913. The extracts are published in "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 154-56. The words of Táhirih are cited on page 155. The transcript of the complete talk is not available in the Bahá’í International Archives.

It is interesting to note that "Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era" by J.E. Esslemont was first published in 1923. It is, therefore, likely that when Shoghi Effendi was writing "God Passes By" in 1944, he was well aware of the existence of the Master's talk and he may well have drawn on it for his description of Táhirih's death.

Martha Root quotes from the same talk of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in "Táhirih the Pure". In the 1981 revision of Miss Root's book the wording of the Master's talk has been very slightly modified, and therefore does not accord exactly with the wording in "Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era".

Extracts from a talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in "Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 154-56, "Equality of Men and Women" [online at reference.bahai.org/en/t/o/BNE/bne-121.html]:

One of the social principles to which Bahá'u'lláh attaches great importance is that women should be regarded as the equals of men and should enjoy equal rights and privileges, equal education, and equal opportunities. The great means on which He relies for bringing about the emancipation of women is universal education. Girls are to receive as good an education as boys. In fact, the education of girls is even more important than that of boys, for in time these girls will become mothers, and, as mothers, they will be the first teachers of the next generation. Children are like green and tender branches; if the early training is right they grow straight, and if it is wrong they grow crooked; and to the end of their lives they are affected by the training of their earliest years. How important, then, that girls should be well and wisely educated!

During His Western tours, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had frequent occasion to explain the Bahá'í teaching on this subject. At a meeting of the Women's Freedom League in London in January 1913, He said:—

Humanity is like a bird with its two wings — the one is male, the other female. Unless both wings are strong and impelled by some common force, the bird cannot fly heavenwards. According to the spirit of this age, women must advance and fulfill their mission in all departments of life, becoming equal to men. They must be on the same level as men and enjoy equal rights. This is my earnest prayer and it is one of the fundamental principles of Bahá'u'lláh. Some scientists have declared that the brains of men weigh more than those of women, and claim this as a proof of man's superiority. Yet when we look around us we see people with small heads, whose brains must weigh little, who show the greatest intelligence and great powers of understanding; and others with big heads, whose brains must be heavy, and yet they are witless. Therefore the avoirdupois of the brain is no true measure of intelligence or superiority.

When men bring forward as a second proof of their superiority the assertion that women have not achieved as much as men, they use poor arguments which leave history out of consideration. If they kept themselves more fully informed historically, they would know that great women have lived and achieved great things in the past, and that there are many living and achieving great things today.

Here 'Abdu'l-Bahá described the achievements of Zenobia and other great women of the past, concluding with an eloquent tribute to the fearless Mary Magdalene, whose faith remained firm while that of the apostles was shaken. He continued:~

Amongst the women of our own time is Qurratu'l-'Ayn, the daughter of a Muhammadan priest. At the time of the appearance of the Báb she showed such tremendous courage and

power that all who heard her were astonished. She threw aside her veil despite the immemorial custom of the women of Persia, and although it was considered impolite to speak with men, this heroic woman carried on controversies with the most learned men, and in every meeting she vanquished them. The Persian Government took her prisoner; she was stoned in the streets, anathematized, exiled from town to town, threatened with death, but she never failed in her determination to work for the freedom of her sisters. She bore persecution and suffering with the greatest heroism; even in prison she gained converts. To a Minister of Persia, in whose house she was imprisoned, she said: "You can kill me as soon as you like but you cannot stop the emancipation of women." At last the end of her tragic life came; she was carried into a garden and strangled. She put on, however, her choicest robes as if she were going to join a bridal party. With such magnanimity and courage she gave her life, startling and thrilling all who saw her. She was a truly great heroine. Today in Persia, among the Bahá'ís, there are women who also show unflinching courage, and who are endowed with great poetic insight. They are most eloquent, and speak before large gatherings of people. Women must go on advancing; they must extend their knowledge of science, literature, history, for the perfection of humanity. Erelong they will receive their rights. Men will see women in earnest, bearing themselves with dignity, improving the civil and political life, opposed to warfare, demanding suffrage and equal opportunities. I expect to see you advance in all phases of life; then will your brows be crowned with the diadem of eternal glory.

Comments

January 10. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding association with Oriental travelers and residents...vital necessity for the exercise in these days of the greatest vigilance and reserve, prudence and caution, on the part of the American believers in their dealings with them."

January 10. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding association with Oriental travelers and residents in the United States and Canada, I desire to emphasize afresh the vital necessity for the exercise in these days of the greatest vigilance and reserve, prudence and caution, on the part of the American believers in their dealings with them."

Letter 31

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada. Dearly-beloved fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God!

Your letter dated Nov. 9, 1925, has been received and read with feelings of deep satisfaction and gratitude. It is most unfortunate that, owing to unavoidable circumstances, I have been prevented from communicating more fully and frequently with the distinguished representatives of those dear fellow-workers of mine, the progress of whose accomplishments I am continually following with the liveliest expectations, loving sympathy and cheerful hope.

The multiplicity of vital and pressing issues, arising out of the steady expansion of the Movement in various parts of the world; the pain and sorrow so keenly felt at the sudden passing of distinguished and dearly-beloved servants of the Cause; grave and unexpected developments in the Holy Land and elsewhere--have all in rapid succession greatly added to the already oppressive burden of responsibility and care which it is my lot and privilege to shoulder in the interests of the Cause. And yet in the midst of my unceasing toil, my afflictions and perplexities, I have found fresh sustenance and comfort in the striking manner in which the pioneers of the Cause in that promising continent are proving themselves worthy of the spiritual heritage bequeathed to them by their departed Master. Refreshed and fortified by their inspiring example, I feel I can pursue the thorny path of my arduous duties with serene confidence, cheerful contentment and undiminished gratitude.

I rejoice to learn of the marvelous effect which your resourcefulness, efficiency and unrelenting efforts are producing upon your admiring brethren of the East. I am fully alive to the eminent share you are contributing to the emancipation of those heroic sufferers in distracted Persia. I am deeply conscious of the part you play in consolidating the position of the Cause in the eyes of both the exalted and lowly, and in hastening the advent of that promised day of universal recognition and triumph for our beloved Cause.

Shrine of Baghdád

We can but dimly discern the signs of that day of priceless victory-- the day when the mission of this sublime and holy Faith will have been unfolded in all its power and glory to the eyes of an unbelieving world. We have only to refer to the

utterances of Bahá'u'lláh in order to realize for ourselves God's invincible power to turn every fleeting abasement, every transient sorrow, into abiding joy and glory. For amid the gloom of humiliation that has now beset Bahá'u'lláh's holy habitation in Baghdád, these prophetic words of His regarding His house shine forth resplendent in their assurance of a future victory: "In truth, I declare, it shall be so abased in the days to come as to cause tears to flow from every discerning eye.... And in the fulness of time, shall the Lord by the power of truth exalt it in the eyes of all the world, cause it to become the mighty standard of His domination, the shrine round which shall circle the concourse of the faithful." How startling in His prediction, how reassuring His promise!

The thoroughness of your methods in handling this grave and highly delicate situation, the promptness of your response, the spirit of unabated confidence, of unrelaxing determination and admirable courage which you have abundantly displayed have, I am certain, endeared you to us all, justified our hopes in you, and ennobled the already lofty position you deservedly occupy among the staunch supporters of God's immortal Cause. Whatever the outcome of your memorable endeavors, the immediate consequences of your strenuous efforts cannot but be a growing realization on the part of those placed in authority that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, despite the calumny and slander showered upon it in the past, has linked the East with the West as no other human agency can possibly link and is capable of demonstrating the reality of that celestial potency which no man can today safely belittle or ignore.

Furthermore, the spontaneous and generous response of the American believers in connection with the land situation on Mount Carmel has, in conjunction with the donations of the friends in other parts of the world, safeguarded such lands as lie in close proximity to the holy Shrines. This highly meritorious effort, blest and sanctified by the bountiful grace of Bahá'u'lláh, has in like manner served to reveal to every discerning eye the friends' unquenchable enthusiasm and unrivalled devotion--the dominant characteristic of a Faith that is still in its stage of tender growth, and now standing on the threshold of undreamt-of achievements.

Judgment of Egyptian Religious Court

Among the disturbing factors that have intensified the difficulties of the present situation is the extraordinary judgment recently passed by the Supreme Religious Court of Egypt, declaring the Bahá'ís of that land adherents of a Faith heretical in character, and at variance with the accepted doctrines of Islam, and hence utterly

outside the sphere of its jurisdiction. What exactly the implication of this verdict will be, the effect its practical application will have on the relations of the Bahá'ís with the followers of the Muslim Faith, what measure of publicity it will receive, what impression it will create in Muslim lands and particularly in hostile Persia, the future only can disclose. So far it has failed to perturb public sentiment or give rise to any official or public demonstration of a nature that would justify or necessitate any action on the part of the American Bahá'ís, who are powerfully demonstrating today their readiness to champion the cause of truth and justice. I will not delay in informing you of the exact measures that I feel will be necessary to take should the occasion arise in future. It is clear and evident that Western influence, the loosening of the bonds of religion, and the consequent waning vitality of the once powerful Muhammadan stronghold of Egypt are in a great measure to account for the indifference and apathy that now seem to characterize the attitude of the masses towards this important and vital issue. This decision, however locally embarrassing, in the present stage of our development, may be regarded as an initial step taken by our very opponents in the path of the eventual universal acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith, as one of the independent recognized religious systems of the world.

National Fund

In connection with the institution of the National Fund and the budgetary system set forth in the minutes of the National Spiritual Assembly, I feel urged to remind you of the necessity of ever bearing in mind the cardinal principle that all contributions to the Fund are to be purely and strictly voluntary in character. It should be made clear and evident to every one that any form of compulsion, however slight and indirect, strikes at the very root of the principle underlying the formation of the Fund ever since its inception. While appeals of a general character, carefully worded and moving and dignified in tone are welcome under all circumstances, it should be left entirely to the discretion of every conscientious believer to decide upon the nature, the amount, and purpose of his or her contribution for the propagation of the Cause.

Association with Orientals

Regarding association with Oriental travelers and residents in the United States and Canada, I desire to emphasize afresh the vital necessity for the exercise in these days of the greatest vigilance and reserve, prudence and caution, on the part

of the American believers in their dealings with them, either in an official or private capacity, whether in business transactions or for purely religious purposes. As the Movement grows in prestige, fame and influence, as the ambitions, malice and ill-will of strangers and enemies correspondingly wax greater, it becomes increasingly important for every individual and Spiritual Assembly to be on their guard lest they fall innocent victims of the evil designs of the malevolent, the self-seeking and greedy.

Touching the publication of articles and pamphlets bearing on the controversial and political issues of the day, I desire to remind my dearly-beloved fellow-workers that at the present stage when the Cause is still in its infancy, any minute and detailed analysis by the friends of subjects that are in the forefront of general discussion would often be misconstrued in certain quarters and give rise to suspicions and misunderstandings that would react unfavorably on the Cause. They would tend to create a misconception of the real object, the true mission, and the fundamental character of the Bahá'í Faith. We should, while endeavoring to uphold loyally and expound conscientiously our social and moral principles in all their essence and purity, in all their bearings upon the divers phases of human society, insure that no direct reference or particular criticism in our exposition of the fundamentals of the Faith would tend to antagonize any existing institution, or help to identify a purely spiritual movement with the base clamorings and contentions of warring sects, factions and nations. We should strive in all our utterances to combine the discretion and noble reticence of the wise with the frankness and passionate loyalty of the ardent advocate of an inspiring Faith. While refusing to utter the word that would needlessly alienate or estrange any individual, government or people, we should fearlessly and unhesitatingly uphold and assert in their entirety such truths the knowledge of which we believe is vitally and urgently needed for the good and betterment of mankind.

The copy of the minutes of the 1925 Bahá'í Convention has been received and, despite the pressure of work, read with deep pleasure and keen interest.

Purpose of Bahá'í Administration

As the administrative work of the Cause steadily expands, as its various branches grow in importance and number, it is absolutely necessary that we bear in mind this fundamental fact that all these administrative activities, however harmoniously and efficiently conducted, are but means to an end, and should be regarded as direct instruments for the propagation of the Bahá'í Faith. Let us take

heed lest in our great concern for the perfection of the administrative machinery of the Cause, we lose sight of the Divine Purpose for which it has been created. Let us be on our guard lest the growing demand for specialization in the administrative functions of the Cause detain us from joining the ranks of those who in the forefront of battle are gloriously engaged in summoning the multitude to this New Day of God. This indeed should be our primary concern; this is our sacred obligation, our vital and urgent need. Let this cardinal principle be ever borne in mind, for it is the mainspring of all future activities, the remover of every embarrassing obstacle, the fulfillment of our Master's dearest wish.

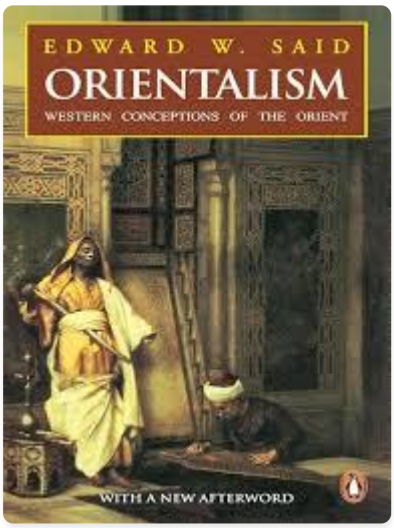
May the year that has just dawned upon us witness in such a glorious field many a signal victory.

Your true brother,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

January 10, 1926.



Comments

January 10. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "the Formative Period of our Faith...synchronizes with a period of deepening gloom, of universal impotence, of ever-increasing destitution and wide-spread disillusionment in the fortunes of a declining age."

Original file: 0354.html (position #123)

January 10. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "This new stage in the gradual unfoldment of the Formative Period of our Faith into which we have just entered--the phase of concentrated teaching activity--synchronizes with a period of deepening gloom, of universal impotence, of ever-increasing destitution and wide-spread disillusionment in the fortunes of a declining age."

> *THIS IS TRULY PROVIDENTIAL*
>
> *This new stage in the gradual unfoldment of the* **Formative Period** *of our Faith into*

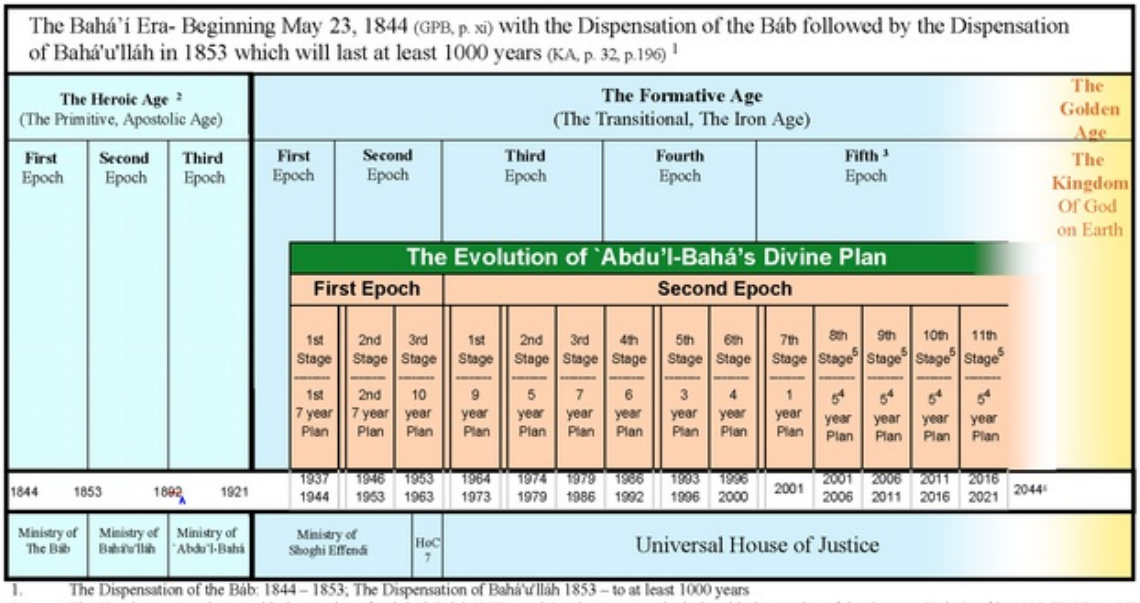
which we have just entered--the phase of concentrated teaching activity--synchronizes with a period of deepening gloom, of universal impotence, of ever-increasing destitution and wide-spread disillusionment in the fortunes of a declining age. This is truly providential and its significance and the opportunities it offers us should be fully apprehended and utilized. Now that the administrative organs of a firmly established Faith are vigorously and harmoniously functioning, and now that the Symbol (i.e., the House of Worship) of its invincible might is lending unprecedented impetus to its spread, an effort unexampled in its scope and sustained vitality is urgently required so that the moving spirit of its Founder may permeate and transform the lives of the countless multitudes that hunger for its teachings. That the beloved friends in America, who have carried triumphantly the banner of His Cause through the initial stages of its development, will in a still greater measure prove themselves capable of meeting the challenge of the present hour, I, for one, can never doubt. Of the evidences of their inexhaustible vitality I am sufficiently and continually conscious. My fervent plea will not, I feel certain, remain unanswered. For them I shall continue to pray from all my heart.

January 10, 1936

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 10. On this date in 1954, Dorothy Beecher Baker, a Hand of the Cause of God, died in a plane crash.

Original file: 0353.html (position #122)

January 10. On this date in 1954, Dorothy Beecher Baker, a Hand of the Cause of God, died in a plane crash.

Comments

January 11. On this date on 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of Persia "... if they are successfully to traverse these last remaining stages, and witness, at the highest levels ... the realization of their profoundest hopes and of their most deeply cherished desires."

Original file: 0352.html (position #121)

January 11. On this date on 1928, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of Persia "... if they are successfully to traverse these last remaining stages, and witness, at the highest levels ... the realization of their profoundest hopes and of their most deeply cherished desires."

> *If, in days to come, that land should be overtaken by diverse afflictions and calamities; if, to the rigours of the present times there should be added the outbreak of widespread civil upheavals; if the country's already dark horizons should become still gloomier and more foreboding, you should neither be filled with trepidation and despondency, nor allow yourselves to be deflected, though it be to*

the extent of a hair's breadth, from that sound and well-considered course that you have been following up till now — from continuing, in other words, your persistent, tireless, and unremitting labours to increase the number of the Bahá'í administrative institutions, to strengthen their foundations, to enhance the fair name that they enjoy, and to consolidate the respect and standing in which they are held. The release of this innocent and wronged community from the bonds of captivity, and its deliverance from the clutches of the enemy and oppressor, cannot but be accompanied by general commotions and disturbances; likewise the attainment by the people of Bahá to a position in which they will enjoy true honour, comfort and tranquillity must inevitably encounter the hostility and resistance, the clamorous opposition and tumultuous protests of all those who harbour enmity and rancour towards them. If, therefore, the troubled waters of the sea of adversity should grow yet more turbulent, if the storm of tribulation should increase in vehemence and assail that sore-tried community from all six sides with fresh disasters, then know unhesitatingly and with unwavering conviction, that the hour of deliverance, the appointed time when the promises of old are to reach their glorious fulfilment, has drawn nigh, and that the means for the accomplishment of supreme and overwhelming victory by the hard-pressed followers of the Greatest Name in that land have all been readied and prepared. Fixity of purpose and unfaltering resolution are the qualities that must needs be manifested by the people of Bahá if they are successfully to traverse these last remaining stages, and witness, at the highest levels, and in a manner that will fill them with astonishment, the realization of their profoundest hopes and of their most deeply cherished desires. Such is the way of God — "and no change canst thou find in the way of God".

(In a letter written by Shoghi Effendi, 11 January 1928 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia — translated from the Persian)

Comments

January 11. On this date in 1980, the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land addressed a letter to the Hands of the Cause of God throughout the world, later published in the May 1980 Bahá'í News, giving an account of the murder of Enoch Olinga on September 16, 1979.

Original file: 0351.html (position #120)

January 11. On this date in 1980, the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land addressed a letter to the Hands of the Cause of God throughout the world, later published in the May 1980 Bahá'í News, giving an account of the murder of Enoch Olinga on September 16, 1979.

Declared a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for his pioneering work in the British Cameroons, Shoghi Effendi entitled Olinga "Abd'l-Futuh", an Arabic name meaning "the father of victories," for the successive waves of people becoming Knights of Bahá'u'lláh in Africa after him. A close associate of Ugandan President Idi Amin, who was deposed and exiled on April 11, 1979, Enoch Olinga, his wife, and three of his five children were murdered by unknown gunmen

on September 16, 1979, during the administration of President Milton Obote when people affiliated with the Amin regime were being systematically targeted. Denis MacEoin touches on this topic in his 1979 *Letter on Bahá'í attitudes towards politics and scholarship*.

A Sacrifice to Fidelity: The senseless, brutal slayings of Enoch Olinga, his wife and children, published in *Bahá'í News*, 590, pages 2-6, May 1980.

> *In all of these sad events it is some consolation to know that apparently the murder of Mr. Olinga was in no way directly connected with either religion or politics; in other words no one associated Enoch with any political factions and this attack on him was not in the nature of an attack on the Faith itself. Enoch may have been killed just because he was an affluent businessman and well known because of this and as a "leader" of the Bahá'ís. For some years past in Uganda the elimination of prominent people has been a fixed policy of certain factions and nearly all those who fell into this category fled the country. Mr. Vuyiya, who arrived in Kampala from Nairobi three days after the event, writes, "... staying in the middle of the town, I had the full effect of the state of near anarchy in Kampala at night. There were shots every night." He points out that in the nightly curfew no one could tell who was roaming about the streets and that every night brought with it "... the news of the murder of yet another family." As nothing worth mentioning, including a large sum of money which was available in Mr. Olinga's desk, seems to have been stolen from the home, some people consider that it was one of the acts being regularly committed by some obscure faction, to create the impression that lawlessness was rampant and thus discredit the efforts of the new Government to maintain law and order. In similar killings these "thugs" have stated they are not thieves but have come "only for lives."*
>
> *Now that detailed reports have been received here, we feel we should acquaint you fully with these matters so that the Bahá'ís, through this' report to you, will be properly informed and not attribute his murder to all kinds of things which have no foundation in fact; we notice through meetings with the friends and letters received here that there is a lot of speculation, misinformation and personal interpretation of events going about. Hence the details contained in this letter, most of which you already know.*
>
> *There is no doubt that the fidelity of Enoch to the Bahá'í community and its interests in Uganda, and in particular to the Mother Temple for Africa, was not*

only outstanding and most touching but, on more than one occasion the respect in which he was held by many prominent non-Bahá'ís enabled him to safeguard the House of Worship and the adjacent National Headquarters, at a time when meetings were forbidden and the country itself in a very dangerous condition. For almost two years (due to the banning of the Faith in Uganda along with twenty-six other religious organizations in September 1977) Enoch and the two Ugandan members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Central and East Africa, Oloro Epyeru and Kolonario Oule, had been made responsible, by the Universal House of Justice, for the protection and guidance of the Faith there. At last conditions had begun to change and our Supreme Body was able to appoint a Uganda Administrative Committee to take over the administrative work, pending such time as the re-election of the National Spiritual Assembly could be held. This important new Committee held its first meeting in the National Haziratu'I-Quds on the Bahá'í Temple property on August 25, 1979. Enoch was present and invited to chair it. He was radiantly happy and distributed to the Committee members present "a well worked out and soul stirring devotional programme," handing each one a new prayer book with passages marked. They all went to the Temple for this most moving devotional inauguration of their work and from there visited the grave of the Hand of the Cause of God Musa Banani and after praying there returned to the National Centre to start their meeting, which they opened with the Tablet of Ahmad. Enoch then presented each one with one of the prayer books as a gift and he and the others all signed each book — truly a precious memento of an historic occasion which constituted the "resurrection" of the Ugandan Bahá'í community.

According to the minutes of that meeting: "the beloved Hand of the Cause of God presented the appointment letter from the Universal House of Justice to the Committee. He observed that this Committee was an arm of the Universal House of Justice stretched over Uganda" and assured them this appointment conferred the capacity and worthiness to do their work and therefore they should rely on the power of the Holy Spirit at all times. The Committee then decided to draft a cable to the Universal House of Justice signifying their acceptance of their appointment and desire to serve worthily. This entire meeting was a "joy-laden" occasion and ended with singing Bahá'í songs.

The following day Enoch again acted as Chairman at the second meeting and set before its members a clear picture of the needs of both the Faith throughout the country and the many things requiring to be done at the Temple property owing to

the depredations caused by the conditions inside Uganda and the war — telephone connection, water supply, office equipment, lawn mowers were all gone; the Universal House of Justice had provided a budget for restoring the property and the National Centre to a condition where it could be kept up and the administrative work function; the property also urgently needed personnel to stay on Kikaaya Hill and protect it. Many duties were outlined and discussed and a plan made to hold a National Briefing Conference during October. This was later called the "Re-Birth Conference."

The next meeting of this Committee took place on September 15th — the day before Enoch's murder. He was not present but the Counsellor Kolonario Oule had specially come to Kampala to meet with it and discuss the work in his area. His arrival at this moment, when the black cloud of catastrophe was already drawing near, was truly providential. As both Ugandan Counsellors — Kolonario Oule and Oloro Epyeru — live about 300 kilometers north-east of Kampala, communication and travel were not easy and Oule apologized for both his and Epyeru's absence, due to illness, from the first meeting. He paid glowing tribute to not only Enoch's services but his "matchless courage" during the most difficult period the Cause had passed through.

We learn from George Olinga, Enoch's eldest son, that from the time the Faith was banned until Idi Amin fell from power his father, on many occasions, stated he would not leave the country or run away. He was not only worried over the morale of the Bahá'ís but was very much concerned about the Bahá'í properties and their protection. That they were safeguarded in the midst of so much turmoil, that precious archive material was removed to a remote spot and nothing happened to it, we owe largely to this fellow Hand of ours, this Enoch we loved so much.

In April 1979 Enoch was injured and very narrowly escaped death in a serious car accident, the cause of which was suspicious; he told George he considered it providential as otherwise he would have gone to his home in Teso and he had learned later that his name was on a list for "liquidation" there. As he was recovering from this accident and living up at the Temple site during the chaotic period of looting in Kampala, his presence there was undoubtedly the reason the Bahá'í properties — particularly the precious Mother Temple of Africa — were not also looted. Generally speaking the looters passed over places which were occupied, especially if a strong personality stood up to them. During this period,

however, Enoch's own home was looted completely bare. He went down one day from Kikaaya Hill to his house and found this going on; for some moments his own life was in acute danger as he was accused at gun point of being a soldier of Amin; when he succeeded in convincing them he was not, his life was spared. He and his family, who for safety's sake he had sent to their home in Teso, then had to set about the complete restoration and refurnishing of their house.

Shortly before the conquest of Kampala had taken place, which preceded the above incident, Enoch's son Badi was hijacked with his pickup by Amin's soldiers and disappeared for over a week. The anguish of worry over his whereabouts and fear for his life was acute and George states that in his father's many prayers he asked Bahá'u'lláh to accept Badi as a sacrifice for His Cause. When Badi was finally released by Amin's soldiers, who had impounded his car for transportation, the relief of the Olinga family was great, but it had been a terrible experience for his young sister Tahirih who suffered severe depression as a result. Indeed, it was partly to cheer her up that the large family reunion was planned for Sunday, September 16th, which was her birthday.

Of his father's last days George writes: "He spent most of his time at Kikaaya cutting the grass around the Temple, sweeping the Temple, and the last few days before his tragic death he had reorganized the Bahá'í Centre, from washing the floor to allocation of rooms for various functions of the newly appointed Administrative Committee. During their first meeting in Kampala I had just arrived from Nairobi and Daddy was overjoyed when I told them that while I was in Kenya I had found the grass mowers for the Temple grounds and that they had been purchased . . . So happy was Daddy during these last days of his life that he told some of the friends he is so relieved to have handed over to the Administrative Committee that he was ready to die."

Even on that fate-laden Sunday, September 16th, Enoch and his wife and the children who were in Kampala had been up at the Temple, as George states that on that day his father "was in a happy mood and spent most of the time in Kikaaya."

As the regular nightly curfew began at 8 p.m. we assume well before that hour the Olingas returned to their home — the former historic home of the Hand of the Cause Musa Banani, which Enoch had bought when Mrs. Banani could no longer live there alone because of the steady increase of robbery and violence inside Kampala, in spite of the fact that the house was in a very good residential district

inside the city; Enoch had added to the property a high barbed wire fence and a gate to ensure greater protection.

It is probably never going to be possible to establish exactly what the terrible course of events was which took place that night; sleeping next to the garage, in a building near the back door, which gave on to the small compound into which, through the gate, the automobile driveway entered the grounds, was a Bahá'í garden boy; on either side of the Olinga property were neighbors. In a city where murder for many weeks has stalked the streets in the dark, and the rattle of automatic fire is frequently heard, people keep inside and under cover themselves when they hear guns going off nearby. No doubt this was equally true of those near the Olinga home.

We are told, however, by the garden boy, that Elizabeth was in the kitchen, at the back of the house preparing dinner with Lennie; Badi was studying in a back bedroom at the end of the inner corridor and Tahirih may have been with him. It is conjectured that there were six armed men, one remained to guard the gate through which they broke into the property, and the other five came to the back door demanding it be opened and firing shots. Whatever exactly took place a trail of blood was found from the kitchen to the room Badi was in and a rough attempt had been made to bandage Lennie's leg where he had been wounded. As this is the room where all except Enoch were murdered, it seems likely they sought refuge there, locked the door and enough time elapsed to try and staunch Lennie's wound before the armed men broke in and evidently lined Elizabeth, Lennie, Badi and Tahirih up against the wall and shot them; two rows of bullet holes showed they were shot both at chest and knee level and the pitiful mangled remains of these four people were found next day on the floor in a pile. Exactly what happened to Enoch is not known; George surmises, from accounts of those who were at least in the vicinity, if not actual eyewitnesses of what took place in the house, that Enoch was in the sitting room, heard the cries and shots, came out into the compound at the back and was taken in either to see his family shot or see them lying dead and once again came out into the compound for he was heard to be weeping and sobbing out loud; he was then shot from behind in the chest and hips and fell in front of the garage. The neighbors stated that they phoned the police five times when all this was happening but were told there were patrol cars in the area; no one came. In the morning, whenever he dared to venture forth, the garden boy found Enoch's body and ran to inform a member of the newly appointed Uganda Administrative Committee who immediately went to the home of "Auntie Claire,"

the much-loved and esteemed early pioneer to Africa who owns a well-known nursery school. During all the warfare and troubles in Uganda and in Kampala, Claire Gung, in spite of her 79 years and very poor health, had remained at her post. Now, at the time of this grievous crisis, despite her own shock and heartbreak, she placed many phone calls, trying to contact George in Kenya and let him know what had happened, seeking to inform the World Centre and receive guidance from the Universal House of Justice, telephoning as far afield as England in case other channels should not prove effective. The solicitude of the Universal House of Justice for Miss Gung's welfare — in the midst of all its own shock, grief and pressing duties at that time — was most touching and was reflected in the constant communications from Haifa regarding the funeral and other matters in which messages of appreciation, assurance of prayers and admonitions to take care of her health were included.

It will be remembered that Sunday, the 16th of September, was to have been a family reunion for all the Olinga children in East Africa; George, his wife and two children were coming back from a visit to a Bahá'í on the coast of Kenya; Patrick was due back in Kampala from a trip to Teso to sell coffee for his father; Godwin, who was in Fort Portal, decided to wait until George arrived and then come in to Kampala. By such tenuous threads are the lives of people suspended! George was delayed because he could not get the right' tires for his car, Patrick decided to wait until Monday and see how much the coffee was sold for, Godwin just waited . . .

At length the frantic telephone calls of Claire Gung succeeded in conveying the terrible news to both the Continental Board of Counsellors' Office in Nairobi and the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya. The Counsellor, Peter Vuyiya, was fortunately in Nairobi, staying at the National Center, and was able to telephone the Universal House of Justice, which was in session when this terrible news was broken to it. From then on the guidance of the House was with the heartbroken friends and family responsible for making all decisions for the funeral, for the burial, for publicity and so on. On that same day, Monday the 17th, George and his wife and children left for Kampala, spending a night en route at Kisumu. Peter Vuyiya decided to not get involved with air travel and left early the 18th, arriving, by a process of many changes from one communal taxi to another, in Kampala before curfew fell.

While all these events were taking place Enoch and his family were still lying Monday morning where their murderers had left them. Two of the devoted

> *African Bahá'ís had immediately gone to the Olinga home and were there when the police made their investigations.*
>
> *In reading over a great many pages of reports one is deeply impressed by the fact that the people on the spot, the victims of civil war, terrorism, looting, constant crimes and dangers, acted with astonishing presence of mind, courage and capability. Their calmness, faith and fortitude shine through the horrible tale of violent death and all its degrading details. We all acutely realize the loss of Enoch and the wanton murder of his wife and children. What we do not perhaps appreciate is the defenseless state of the dead in a city devoid of facilities, still mostly without any law enforcement, in hot weather, in a country depleted of almost every commodity. Yet the three Counsellors, Oloro Epyeru, Kolonario Oule, and Peter Vuyiya, with the members of the very recently appointed Administrative Committee, together with members of Enoch's family and a handful of friends, lifted — like veritable giants — the manifold burdens of this unheard-of situation and carried their work forward to a beautiful and dignified conclusion when the bodies were finally interred on Tuesday, September 25th, in the Bahá'í cemetery.*

Comments

January 11. On this date on 1971, the UHJ wrote "Bahá’u’lláh is able to open doors and change conditions in ways far beyond our understanding...power of Bahá’u’lláh to reinforce the efforts of those who serve Him, of His promise to do so, and of the impotence of all our deeds without this divine.."

Original file: 0350.html (position #119)

January 11. On this date on 1971, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany stating "Bahá’u’lláh is able to open doors and change conditions in ways far beyond our understanding...power of Bahá’u’lláh to reinforce the efforts of those who serve Him, of His promise to do so, and of the impotence of all our deeds without this divine assistance...constant consciousness of dependence upon Him...their awareness of His ever-present care and their reliance upon Him in every aspect of their lives."

*The progress of the Cause depends upon many factors. . . It is . . . to those factors that are directly the result of the actions of the Bahá'ís that we wish to direct our remarks, because if the Bahá'ís will but do their part—however unpromising the prospect—**Bahá'u'lláh is able to open doors and change conditions in ways far beyond our understanding.***

*The first [factor] is a greater realization of the **power of Bahá'u'lláh to reinforce the efforts of those who serve Him, of His promise to do so, and of the impotence of all our deeds without this divine assistance.** Any evaluation of a situation is entirely misleading if it does not take this supreme power into consideration; whereas **constant consciousness of dependence upon Him** enables the Bahá'ís to formulate audacious plans and confidently carry them through to completion in the face of seemingly insuperable obstacles.*

Armed with this consciousness, the believers should then approach the winning of the goals of the Nine Year Plan with the spirit that will achieve them. This Plan is a stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The achievement of its goals is of the utmost urgency and importance because the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are engaged in a race against time. Mankind is being engulfed in the ruin precipitated by its own folly; the longer we Bahá'ís delay in achieving the tasks that God lays before us, the greater is the suffering of our fellow men. . . The believers should consider the goals, recognize that they are intended to be won, decide what is needed to win them, and then, however hopeless the prospect may seem, set out determinedly to do whatever is needed, confident that Bahá'u'lláh will reinforce them with His Hosts and will open the doors of victory before them.

*These . . . points are closely interlinked, for it is reliance upon Bahá'u'lláh that will enable the friends to pioneer, it is the awareness of the imperative nature of the goals that will inspire them to do so and will guide them to choose their posts, and it is their sacrifice in arising to leave their homes that will call down upon them the divine confirmations and will, through living experience, deepen their love for God, **their awareness of His ever-present care and their reliance upon Him in every aspect of their lives.***

Comments

January 11. On this date on 1942 Shoghi Effendi wrote "the whole theory of Divine Revelation rests on the infallibility of the Prophet, be He Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, or one of the others. If they are not infallible, then They are not Divine, and thus lose that essential link with God..."

Original file: 0349.html (position #118)

January 11. On this date on 1942 Shoghi Effendi wrote (also here) "the whole theory of Divine Revelation rests on the infallibility of the Prophet, be He Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, or one of the others. If they are not infallible, then They are not Divine, and thus lose that essential link with God..."

> *1572. The Whole Theory of Divine Revelation Rests on the Infallibility of the*

Prophets

"Regarding your Bahá'í friend who does not fully understand the infallibility of the Manifestation of God: You should influence that person to study the matter more deeply, and to realize that the whole theory of Divine Revelation rests on the infallibility of the Prophet, be He Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, or one of the others. If they are not infallible, then They are not Divine, and thus lose that essential link with God which, we believe, is the bond that educates men and causes all human progress."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 11, 1942)

Also here...

1844. Spiritual Education and Progress Depend on Recognition of the Infallibility of the Manifestation of God

"Regarding your Bahá'í friend who does not fully understand the infallibility of the Manifestation of God: You should influence that person to study the matter more deeply, and to realize that the whole theory of Divine Revelation rests on the infallibility of the Prophet, be He Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, or one of the Others. If They are not infallible, then They are not divine, and thus lose that essential link with God which, we believe, is the bond that educates men and causes all human progress."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 11, 1942)

Comments

January 11. On this date on 2014, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice expressing "concern about the challenge Bahá'ís encounter in understanding and upholding the Teachings in the face of powerful social forces influencing public attitudes towards homosexuality."

January 11. On this date on 2014, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice expressing "concern about the challenge Bahá'ís encounter in understanding and upholding the Teachings in the face of powerful social forces influencing public attitudes towards homosexuality."

Comments

January 12. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote the Deputies and Representatives of the institution of Ḥuqúqu’lláh "you are assisting in the advancement of a process which will, in the centuries ahead, give rise to a transformation of society far beyond our present capacity to comprehend."

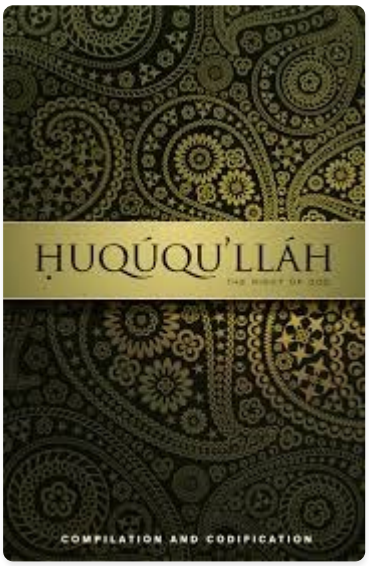
January 12. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote the Deputies and Representatives of the institution of Ḥuqúqu’lláh "you are assisting in the advancement of a process which will, in the centuries ahead, give rise to a transformation of society far beyond our present capacity to comprehend."

> *It is clear that, over the past decade, more and more believers have become*

informed of the significance of the law of Huqúqu'lláh, and are following its provisions. You may well contemplate with satisfaction the results of your labours, as you formulate your plans for the extension of the influence of this mighty law to all segments of the worldwide Bahá'í community. Your integrity, the scrupulous care with which you have handled the funds entrusted to you, and your efficiency in providing receipts and maintaining accurate records have all contributed to the confidence of the believers in this institution and to the high prestige with which it is held in the Bahá'í community.

In carrying out your functions, you are assisting in the advancement of a process which will, in the centuries ahead, give rise to a transformation of society far beyond our present capacity to comprehend.

(12 January 2003, written by the Universal House of Justice to the Deputies and Representatives of the institution of Ḥuqúqu'lláh)



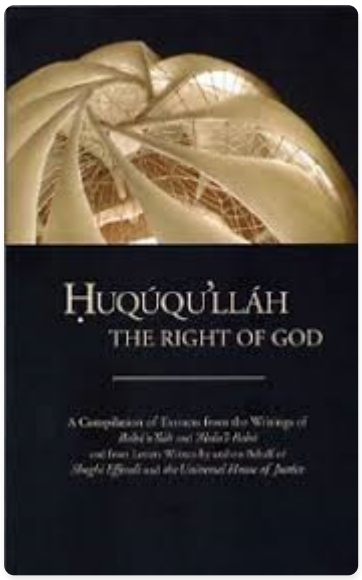
Comments

January 12. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote "The institution of Huqúqu’lláh will, during the course of this Dispensation, contribute to the spiritualization of humanity through the promotion of a new attitude to the acquisition and use of material resources."

January 12. On this date in 2003, the UHJ wrote "The institution of Huqúqu’lláh will, during the course of this Dispensation, contribute to the spiritualization of humanity through the promotion of a new attitude to the acquisition and use of material resources. It will provide the material resources necessary for great collective enterprises designed to improve all aspects of life, and will be a powerful element in the growth of a world civilization."

> *The institution of Huqúqu’lláh will, during the course of this Dispensation, contribute to the spiritualization of humanity through the promotion of a new*

> *attitude to the acquisition and use of material resources. It will provide the material resources necessary for great collective enterprises designed to improve all aspects of life, and will be a powerful element in the growth of a world civilization.*
>
> *(12 January 2003, written by the Universal House of Justice to the Deputies and Representatives of the institution of Ḥuqúqu'lláh)*



Comments

January 12. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the Friends' Meeting House, St. Martin's Lane, London.

January 12. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the Friends' Meeting House, St. Martin's Lane, London.

> *ADDRESS BY 'Abdu'l-BAHÁ AT THE FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, ST MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON, W.C.*
>
> *Sunday, January 12th, 1913*
>
> *About one thousand years ago a society was formed in Persia called the Society of the Friends, who gathered together for silent communion with the Almighty.*
>
> *They divided Divine philosophy into two parts: one kind is that of which the knowledge can be acquired through lectures and study in schools and colleges. The second kind of philosophy was that of the Illuminati, or followers of the inner light. The schools of this philosophy were held in silence. Meditating, and turning their faces to the Source of Light, from that central Light the mysteries of the Kingdom were reflected in the hearts of these people. All the Divine problems were solved by this power of illumination.*
>
> *This Society of Friends increased greatly in Persia, and up to the present time their societies exist. Many books and epistles were written by their leaders. When they assemble in their meeting-house they sit silently and contemplate; their leader opens with a certain proposition, and says to the assembly `You must meditate on this problem'. Then, freeing their minds from everything else, they sit and reflect,*

and before long the answer is revealed to them. Many abstruse divine questions are solved by this illumination.

Some of the great questions unfolding from the rays of the Sun of Reality upon the mind of man are: the problem of the reality of the spirit of man; of the birth of the spirit; of its birth from this world into the world of God; the question of the inner life of the spirit and of its fate after its ascension from the body.

They also meditate upon the scientific questions of the day, and these are likewise solved.

These people, who are called `Followers of the inner light', attain to a superlative degree of power, and are entirely freed from blind dogmas and imitations. Men rely on the statements of these people: by themselves-- within themselves--they solve all mysteries.

If they find a solution with the assistance of the inner light, they accept it, and afterwards they declare it: otherwise they would consider it a matter of blind imitation. They go so far as to reflect upon the essential nature of the Divinity, of the Divine revelation, of the manifestation of the Deity in this world. All the divine and scientific questions are solved by them through the power of the spirit.

Bahá'u'lláh says there is a sign (from God) in every phenomenon: the sign of the intellect is contemplation and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at one time--he cannot both speak and meditate.

It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and the reality is revealed.

You cannot apply the name `man' to any being void of this faculty of meditation; without it he would be a mere animal, lower than the beasts.

Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit--the bestowal of the Spirit is given in reflection and meditation.

The spirit of man is itself informed and strengthened during meditation; through it affairs of which man knew nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it he

receives Divine inspiration, through it he receives heavenly food.

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself: in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves. To illustrate this, think of man as endowed with two kinds of sight; when the power of insight is being used the outward power of vision does not see.

This faculty of meditation frees man from the animal nature, discerns the reality of things, puts man in touch with God.

This faculty brings forth from the invisible plane the sciences and arts. Through the meditative faculty inventions are made possible, colossal undertakings are carried out; through it governments can run smoothly. Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God.

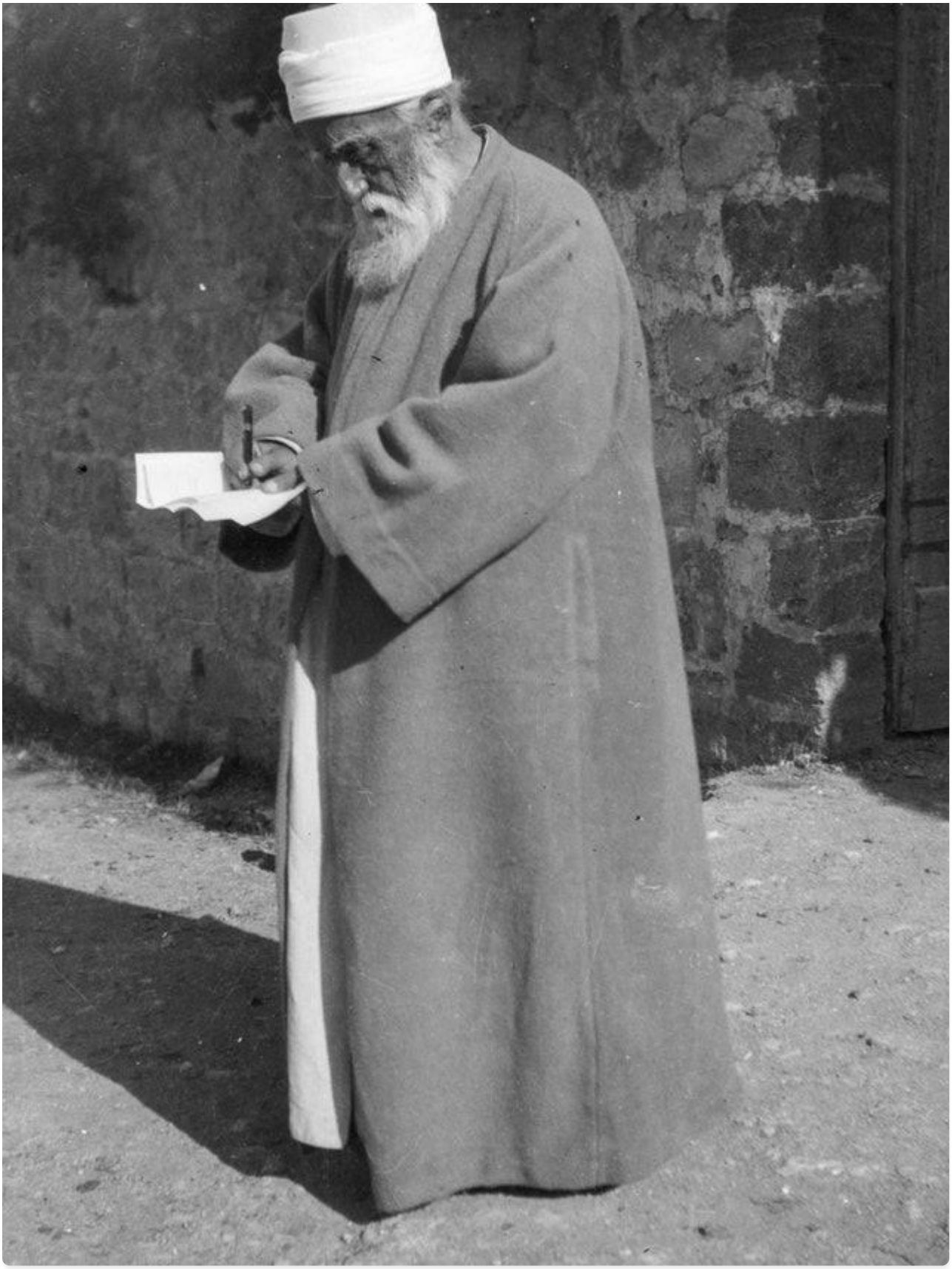
Nevertheless some thoughts are useless to man; they are like waves moving in the sea without result. But if the faculty of meditation is bathed in the inner light and characterized with divine attributes, the results will be confirmed.

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror; if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of these.

But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained.

Therefore let us keep this faculty rightly directed-- turning it to the heavenly Sun and not to earthly objects--so that we may discover the secrets of the Kingdom, and comprehend the allegories of the Bible and the mysteries of the spirit.

May we indeed become mirrors reflecting the heavenly realities, and may we become so pure as to reflect the stars of heaven.



Comments

January 12. On this date in 1853, subsequent to the failed assassination attempt of the Naser al-Din Shah Qajar by some Bábis, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from Iran to Baghdad accompanied by some of his family and an entourage of Russian guards.

Original file: 0344.html (position #113)

January 12. On this date in 1853, subsequent to the failed assassination attempt of the Naser al-Din Shah Qajar by some Bábis, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from Iran to Baghdad accompanied by some of his family and an entourage of Russian guards.

From Nabíl-i-A'zam' s *The Dawn-Breakers*, CHAPTER XXVI: ATTEMPT ON THE SHAH'S LIFE, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

> *The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Baha'u'llah under his protection, and*

invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for Iraq. Nine months after His return from Karbila, on the first day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1269 A.H., Baha'u'llah, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch and Aqay-i-Kalim, and escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an official representing the Russian legation, set out from Tihran on His journey to Baghdad.

Comments

January 12. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote "it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome."

Original file: 0343.html (position #112)

January 12. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice wrote "it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome."

> *1222. Homosexuality and Transsexuality*
>
> *"A number of sexual problems such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the*

> *best medical assistance. But* ***it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome.*** *This may require a hard struggle, but so also can be the struggle of a heterosexual person to control his or her desires. The exercise of self-control in this, as in so very many other aspects of life, has a beneficial effect on the progress of the soul. It should, moreover, be borne in mind that although to be married is highly desirable, and Bahá'u'lláh has strongly recommended it, it is not the central purpose of life. If a person has to wait a considerable period before finding a spouse, or if ultimately, he or she must remain single, it does not mean that he or she is thereby unable to fulfil his or her life's purpose."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 12, 1973: cited in Messages from The Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973, p. 110-111)*

Comments

January 12. On this date in 2006, the UHJ wrote, "the authority of letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi...there is no justification for summarily dismissing the authoritative guidance contained in this body of correspondence."

Original file: 0342.html (position #111)

January 12. On this date in 2006, the UHJ wrote, "the authority of letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi...there is no justification for summarily dismissing the authoritative guidance contained in this body of correspondence."

Comments

January 12. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering."

January 12. On this date in 1973, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering."

> *In all this we have been speaking about the attitude that Bahá'ís should have towards the law of Bahá'u'lláh. You, however, as a doctor working mainly as a counsellor in family and sexual problems, will mostly be concerned with advising non-Bahá'ís who do not accept, and see no reason to follow, the laws of*

Bahá'u'lláh. You are already a qualified practitioner in your field, and no doubt you give advice on the basis of what you have learned from study and experience -- a whole fabric of concepts about the human mind, its growth, development and proper functioning, which you have learned and evolved without reference to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. ***Now, as a Bahá'í, you know that what Bahá'u'lláh teaches about the purpose of human life,*** *the nature of the human being and the proper conduct of human life, is* ***divinely revealed and therefore true. However, it will inevitably take time for you not only to study the Bahá'í teachings so that you clearly understand them, but also to work out how they modify your professional concepts. This is, of course, not an unusual predicament for a scientist.*** *How often in the course of research is a factor discovered which requires a revolution in thinking over a wide field of human endeavour. You must be guided in each case by your own professional knowledge and judgement as illuminated by your growing knowledge of the Bahá'í teachings; undoubtedly you will find that your own understanding of the human problems dealt with in your work will change and develop and you will see new and improved ways of helping the people who come to you. Psychology is still a very young and inexact science, and* ***as the years go by Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering.***

(12 January 1973 written by the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "He was sorry to hear that the piece of plaster from the walls of the Prison of Mah-ku had not been placed in the grave of Mr. Maxwell; and he would like the National Assembly, with the greatest of care, to see that somehow..."

Original file: 0340.html (position #109)

January 13. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "He was sorry to hear that the piece of plaster from the walls of the Prison of Mah-ku had not been placed in the grave of Mr. Maxwell; and he would like the National Assembly, with the greatest of care, to see that somehow or other in the foundation of the monument this piece of plaster is carefully inserted and preserved; if necessary, the head-stone can be removed, and it can be put under it, and the head-stone rebuilt in such a way as not to damage the head-stone.

Haifa, Israel,

January 13, 1956.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.

The beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you the following:

*He was sorry to hear that the piece of plaster from the walls of the Prison of Mah-ku had not been placed in the grave of Mr. Maxwell **5**; and he would like the National Assembly, with the greatest of care, to see that somehow or other in the foundation of the monument this piece of plaster is carefully inserted and preserved; if necessary, the head-stone can be removed, and it can be put under it, and the head-stone rebuilt in such a way as not to damage the head-stone.*

He has decided that, in view of the fact that Anticosti is so extremely difficult to get into, the Canadian Assembly can choose some other goal as substitute for Anticosti. In other words, a territory or an island in the vicinity of Canada, which has never been opened to the Faith, may be opened in the place of Anticosti, and thus the goals of the Ten Year Plan will not be decreased. On the other hand, Anticosti should be maintained as an objective; and every effort be made to get a Bahá'í in there.

*At present, Mr. Allan Raynor **24** of your Assembly is visiting here, and, although unfortunately he has been laid up with a cold, it has been a great pleasure to have a Canadian Assembly member here.*

With warmest Bahá'í greetings,

R. RABBANI.

***5** William Sutherland Maxwell--architect of the Shrine of the Báb, appointed a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951, died in Montreal in 1952. His "saintly life" is described in "Bahá'í World" Vol. XII, In Memoriam.*

***24** Allan Raynor--member of the National Spiritual Assembly 1954-60.*

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "in view of the fact that Anticosti is so extremely difficult to get into, the Canadian Assembly can choose some other goal as substitute for Anticosti. In other words, a territory or an island in the vicinity of Canada ...."

Original file: 0339.html (position #108)

January 13. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Canadian Bahá'ís "in view of the fact that Anticosti is so extremely difficult to get into, the Canadian Assembly can choose some other goal as substitute for Anticosti. In other words, a territory or an island in the vicinity of Canada, which has never been opened to the Faith, may be opened in the place of Anticosti, and thus the goals of the Ten Year Plan will not be decreased. On the other hand, Anticosti should be maintained as an objective; and every effort be made to get a Bahá'í in there."

Haifa, Israel,

January 13, 1956.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.

The beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you the following:

*He was sorry to hear that the piece of plaster from the walls of the Prison of Mah-ku had not been placed in the grave of Mr. Maxwell **5**; and he would like the National Assembly, with the greatest of care, to see that somehow or other in the foundation of the monument this piece of plaster is carefully inserted and preserved; if necessary, the head-stone can be removed, and it can be put under it, and the head-stone rebuilt in such a way as not to damage the head-stone.*

He has decided that, in view of the fact that Anticosti is so extremely difficult to get into, the Canadian Assembly can choose some other goal as substitute for Anticosti. In other words, a territory or an island in the vicinity of Canada, which has never been opened to the Faith, may be opened in the place of Anticosti, and thus the goals of the Ten Year Plan will not be decreased. On the other hand, Anticosti should be maintained as an objective; and every effort be made to get a Bahá'í in there.

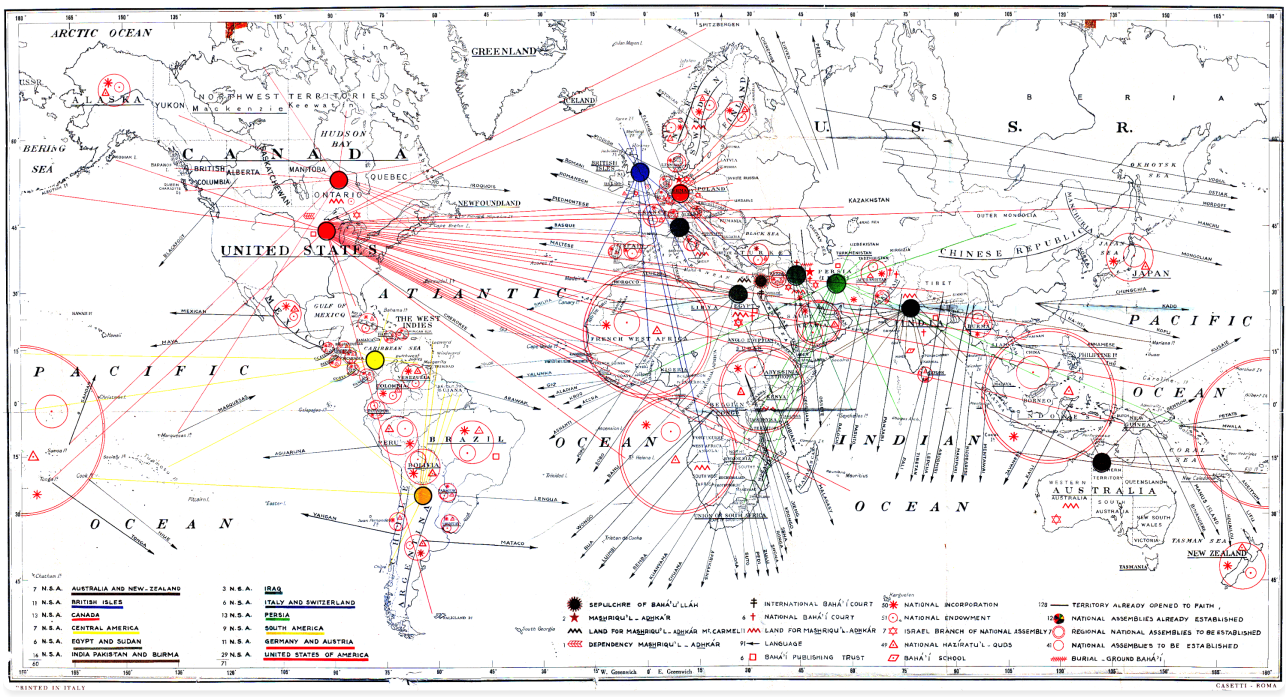
*At present, Mr. Allan Raynor **24** of your Assembly is visiting here, and, although unfortunately he has been laid up with a cold, it has been a great pleasure to have a Canadian Assembly member here.*

With warmest Bahá'í greetings,

R. RABBANI.

***5** William Sutherland Maxwell--architect of the Shrine of the Báb, appointed a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951, died in Montreal in 1952. His "saintly life" is described in "Bahá'í World" Vol. XII, In Memoriam.*

***24** Allan Raynor--member of the National Spiritual Assembly 1954-60.*


ARCTIC OCEAN
GREENLAND
U. S. S. R.
C A N A D A
UNITED STATES
A T L A N T I C
P A C I F I C
O C E A N
I N D I A N
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
JAPAN
BRAZIL
SEPULCHRE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
MASHRIQU'L - ADHKÁR
LAND FOR MASHRIQU'L - ADHKÁR
DEPENDENCY MASHRIQU'L - ADHKÁR
INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COURT
NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COURT
LANGUAGE
BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST
NATIONAL INCORPORATION
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
ISRAEL BRANCH OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
NATIONAL HAZIRATU'L - QUDS
BAHÁ'Í SCHOOL
TERRITORY ALREADY OPENED TO FAITH
NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES ALREADY ESTABLISHED
REGIONAL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES TO BE ESTABLISHED
NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES TO BE ESTABLISHED
BURIAL - GROUND BAHÁ'Í
AUSTRALIA AND NEW - ZEALAND
BRITISH ISLES
CANADA
CENTRAL AMERICA
EGYPT AND SUDAN
INDIA PAKISTAN AND BURMA
IRAQ
ITALY AND SWITZERLAND
PERSIA
SOUTH AMERICA
GERMANY AND AUSTRIA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1922, "The Palestine Post" carried an article titled "Bahaists Seek to Proselytize Persian Jews" opening with the words "A warning has been issued by the Chief Rabbinate here to the Persian Jews against the recent widespread missionary activity of the Bahaists ..."

Original file: 0338.html (position #107)

January 13. On this date in 1922, "The Palestine Post" carried an article from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency titled "Bahaists Seek to Proselytize Persian Jews" opening with the words "A warning has been issued by the Chief Rabbinate here to the Persian Jews against the recent widespread missionary activity of the Bahaists, followers of the new universal religion, the founder of which, Sir Abdul Bahai, died at Haifa recently."

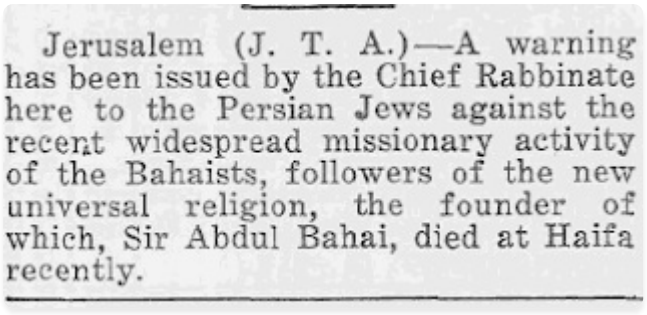
BAHAISTS SEEK TO PROSELYTIZE
PERSIAN JEWS.

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1922, "The Palestine Post" carried an article titled "Bahaists Seek to Proselytize Persian Jews" opening with the words "A warning has been issued by the Chief Rabbinate here to the Persian Jews against the recent widespread missionary activity of the Bahaists ..."

Original file: 0337.html (position #106)

January 13. On this date in 1922, "The Palestine Post" carried an article from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency titled "Bahaists Seek to Proselytize Persian Jews" opening with the words "A warning has been issued by the Chief Rabbinate here to the Persian Jews against the recent widespread missionary activity of the Bahaists, followers of the new universal religion, the founder of which, Sir Abdul Bahai, died at Haifa recently."



Jerusalem (J. T. A.)—A warning has been issued by the Chief Rabbinate here to the Persian Jews against the recent widespread missionary activity of the Bahaists, followers of the new universal religion, the founder of which, Sir Abdul Bahai, died at Haifa recently.

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1943, Kiser Barnes, later a member of the Universal House of Justice, was born in Baltimore, Maryland.

January 13. On this date in 1943, Kiser Barnes, later a member of the Universal House of Justice, was born in Baltimore, Maryland.

Kiser Barnes was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on January 13, 1943. Kiser Barnes obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Morgan State University in 1965 and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1974. Barnes would practice law in Maryland where he also held senior positions in human rights organizations. He would subsequently relocate to West Africa where he held senior academic posts at universities in Benin, Togo, and Nigeria. Barnes was a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at Obafemi Awolowo University in , Ife, Nigeria where he taught the Law of Business Associations, Law of Contracts, and International Economic Law from 1980 to 1993. He earned a Masters Degree in the Philosophy of Law from Obafemi Awolowo University in 1984.

Kiser Barnes was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Benin from 1977 to 1979. He was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for the propagation of the Faith in Nigeria and served in that capacity from 1981 to 1990. In 1990 he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith in Africa.

Three years later, in 1993, he was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. The International Teaching Centre, whose seat is at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, is composed of nine Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice and tasked with duties to stimulate and coordinate the Continental Board of Counselors and assist the Universal House of Justice in matters relating to the teaching and protection of the faith.

All of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre.

In 2000, Barnes was elected to the Universal House of Justice. After thirteen years of service on the Universal House of Justice, Barnes retired from that body in 2013.

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "if an avowed follower of Bahá'u'lláh were to immerse himself in, and fathom the depths of, the ocean of these heavenly teachings.. life, materially, intellectually and spiritually, will be safe from toil and trouble... sadness or despondency

Original file: 0335.html (position #104)

January 13. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote (also here) "if an avowed follower of Bahá'u'lláh were to immerse himself in, and fathom the depths of, the ocean of these heavenly teachings,...such a person's life, materially, intellectually and spiritually, will be safe from toil and trouble, and unaffected by setbacks and perils, or any sadness or despondency."

> *Praise be to God that the spirit of the Holy Writings and Tablets which have been revealed in this wondrous Dispensation concerning matters of major or minor importance, whether essential or otherwise, related to the sciences and the arts, to natural philosophy, literature, politics or economics, have so permeated the world that since the inception of the world in the course of past Dispensations and bygone ages nothing like it has ever been seen or heard. Indeed if an avowed follower of Bahá'u'lláh were to immerse himself in, and fathom the depths of, the ocean of these heavenly teachings, and with utmost care and attention deduce from each of them the subtle mysteries and consummate wisdom that lie enshrined therein, such a person's life, materially, intellectually and spiritually, will be safe from toil and trouble, and unaffected by setbacks and perils, or any sadness or despondency. (Letter of Shoghi Effendi to the believers in Ádhirbáyján, dated 13 January 1923, translated from the Persian at the Bahá'í World Centre; cited in "The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith,"compiled by the Research Department, BWC, 1983)*

Comments

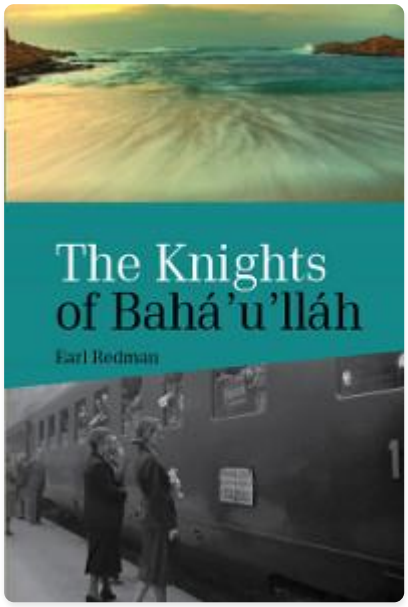
January 13. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote "The remainder (of pioneers) are urged to arise as quickly as possible before the confusion and chaos which are engulfing the old order disrupt transportation and communications and cause doors which are now open to be closed in our faces."

January 13. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote "The remainder (of pioneers) are urged to arise as quickly as possible before the confusion and chaos which are engulfing the old order disrupt transportation and communications and cause doors which are now open to be closed in our faces."

Original file: 0334.html (position #103)

> *"The remainder (of pioneers) are urged to arise as quickly as possible before the*

> *confusion and chaos which are engulfing the old order disrupt transportation and communications and cause doors which are now open to be closed in our faces."*
>
> *— The Universal House of Justice, from a letter dated January 13, 1975, to the Bahá'ís of the World*



Comments

January 13. On this date in 1978, the UHJ wrote the NSA of India "Bahá'ís may receive contributions from non-Bahá'ís for charitable activities whose beneficiaries are non-Bahá'ís as well...the acceptance of funds from any source should in no way affect the school's direction and policy."

Original file: 0333.html (position #102)

January 13. On this date in 1978, the UHJ wrote the NSA of India "Bahá'ís may receive contributions from non-Bahá'ís for charitable activities whose beneficiaries are non-Bahá'ís as well. However, it is very important to ensure that the acceptance of funds from any source should in no way affect the school's direction and policy."

> *1890. Contributions from Non-Bahá'ís for Maintenance of Tutorial Schools*

> *"Your letter ... about accepting donations from non-Bahá'ís for the maintenance of tutorial schools has been received, and we have been asked to reply as follows.*
>
> *"Bahá'ís may receive contributions from non-Bahá'ís for charitable activities whose beneficiaries are non-Bahá'ís as well. However, it is very important to ensure that the acceptance of funds from any source should in no way affect the school's direction and policy."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, January 13, 1978)*

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1961, the Bahá'í Temple in Kampala, Uganda, which had been designed by Charles Mason Remey, was dedicated.

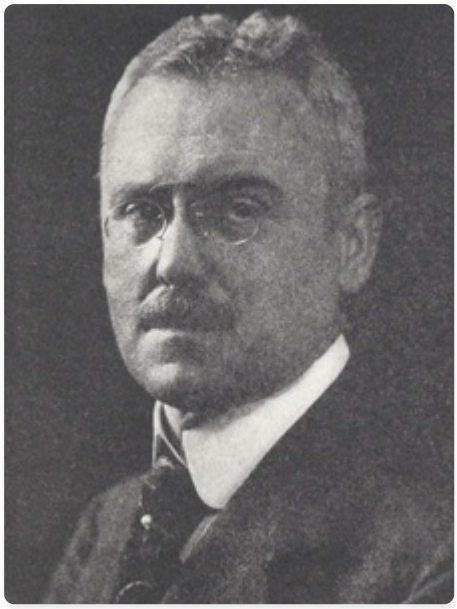
Original file: 0332.html (position #101)

January 13. On this date in 1961, the Bahá'í Temple in Kampala, Uganda, which had been designed by Charles Mason Remey, was dedicated.

Comments

January 13. On this date in 1931, Albert Schwarz, an early German Bahá'í who served as the inaugural Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria when it was established in 1922, died. He served on that body as Chairman until his death.

January 13. On this date in 1931, Albert Schwarz, an early German Bahá'í who served as the inaugural Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria when it was established in 1922, died. He served on the body as Chairman until his death.



Comments

January 14. On this date in 1958, Paul E. Haney, Horace Holley, and Corinne True wrote a letter about Ahmad Sohrab and the New History Society, concluding "that activities conducted by Ahmad Sohrab through the New History Society are to be considered as entirely independent of the Cause..."

Original file: 0330.html (position #99)

January 14. On this date in 1958, Paul E. Haney, Horace Holley, and Corinne True wrote a letter about Ahmad Sohrab and the New History Society, concluding "that activities conducted by Ahmad Sohrab through the New History Society are to be considered as entirely independent of the Cause, as outside the jurisdiction of the local and National Assembly, and hence in no wise entitled to the cooperation of Bahá'ís."

Ahmad Sohrab and the New History Society

by Paul E. Haney, Horace Holley, and Corinne True

1958-01-14

The American Hands of the Cause have been requested by the National Spiritual Assembly to compile data on the defection of Ahmad Sohrab and the formation of the New History Society and the Caravan, which it sponsors.

1. The Tablets of the Divine Plan were brought to America by Ahmad Sohrab at the Guardian's request and presented by Sohrab at the Annual Convention held in Hotel McAlpine, New York, in April 1919. Before the Convention the Bahá'í Temple Unity (later succeeded by the National Spiritual Assembly) published these Tablets in pamphlet form, introduced by Sohrab's personal remarks, Sohrab read these remarks at the Convention. When the Tablets of the Divine Plan were later reprinted, Sohrab's remarks were deleted.

2. Bahá'í News, November, 1927, published a statement by the National Spiritual Assembly that the Guardian had been requested to deal with the problem of reviewing the diary notes of Ahmad Sohrab. The Guardian explained that all notes not approved by the Master Himself (in writing) have only the status of personal impressions and not as direct quotations of the Master's words.

3. Bahá'í News, August, 1930, published a statement by the National Spiritual Assembly entitled The Case of Ahmad Sohrab and the New History Society. Summarized, the article stated that the “New History Society was begun in New York early in 1929 by Sohrab, "one of its avowed purposes being to spread the Bahá'í teachings. Neither the local nor the National Assembly was consulted in the matter, and the meetings and activities of the New History Society have been maintained apart from the principles of consultation which today, under the Will and Testament of 'Abdu’l-Bahá, form the basis of Bahá'í unity and the protection of the Cause."

"Both the local and National Assembly on several occasions attempted, through oral and written communications, to bring about full and frank consultation with the leaders of the New History Society, but without success.

"Under these conditions it becomes the obvious responsibility of the National Spiritual Assembly to inform the friends that activities conducted by Ahmad Sohrab through the New History Society are to be considered as entirely independent of the Cause, as outside the jurisdiction of the local and National Assembly, and hence in no wise entitled to the cooperation of Bahá'ís."

This statement also quoted from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian by his Secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly on May 30, 1930: "To accept the Cause without the administration is like accepting the teachings without acknowledging the divine station of Bahá'u'lláh. To be a Bahá'í is to accept the Cause in its entirety...." "The administration is the social order of Bahá'u'lláh. Without it all the principles of the Cause will remain abortive. To take exception to this, therefore, is to take exception to the fabric that Bahá'u'lláh has prescribed, it is to disobey His law."

Later that same year, in November 1930, Bahá'í News, the National Assembly published a detailed supplementary statement, quoting passages from the Aqdas, from the Master's Will and Testament, and from the Guardian's letters published in Bahá'í Administration, followed by a reprint of the exchange of correspondence and cables with Mrs. Chanler, and with the Guardian, including the Guardian's cable to New York believers: "True unity can only be preserved by maintenance paramount position National Spiritual Assembly," and his cable approving the statement (referred to above) published in August, 1930, Bahá'í News. Further, in a letter from Haifa to the Yonkers Assembly, "The Guardian pointed out the difference between the freedom defined by Bahá'u'lláh ("To have liberty is to observe My commandments") and that advocated by Sohrab ("The other kind of freedom which is in defiance of law He (Bahá'u'lláh) considers to be animal, and far from being of any good to man").

1. In November, 1941, the National Spiritual Assembly distributed a mimeographed statement concerning the New History Society entitled The Basis of the Bahá'í Community, which explained the purpose and outcome of the lawsuit entered against the founders of the New History Society to prevent their misuse of the name "Bahá'í" on which the National Spiritual Assembly had obtained a trade mark patent. The court took the position that it was not authorized to decide religious questions.

The statement therefore stressed the spiritual validity of the teachings, the Will and Testament and the institution of the Guardianship, and pointed out that the New History Society was in direct disobedience to the Faith in claiming to be a "Bahá'í" organization. "These movements sponsored by deluded, self-seeking adventurers find themselves, sooner or later, enmeshed in the machinations of their authors, are buried in shame and sink eventually into complete oblivion." (Shoghi Effendi).

During the second World War the New History Society put forth an alleged passage from 'Abdu'1-Baha which would justify citizens in refusing to obey their governments when drafted into the military forces. The National Spiritual Assembly was obliged to explain the

true Bahá'í position, as set forth by the Guardian, to the federal authorities.

1. A letter dated June 1, 1952, written on behalf of the Guardian by the Assistant Secretary, informed the National Spiritual Assembly that Ahmad Sohrab had cabled the Israeli Minister of Religion to influence the court case brought by the Covenant-breakers, against the Guardian, and which resulted in complete vindication of the Guardian's control of the Bahá'í Shrines and properties. Sohrab's cable identified the Caravan with the Covenant-breakers and stated that the organization was not under the authority of Shoghi Effendi. In a letter dated May 25, 1941, the Guardian wrote through his Secretary that Sohrab "is no doubt the most subtle, resourceful and indefatigable enemy the Faith has had in America."

This summary is sufficient to make it perfectly clear that the New History Society and the Caravan have been maintained as instruments to destroy the unity of the Bahá'ís and to create a false conception of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. This is nothing else but Covenant-breaking, and the believers were therefore years ago warned to have no connection whatever with these societies nor with their founders and leaders. The Bahá’í community derives its spiritual vitality from the Manifestation of God. To retain its relationship to the Manifestation, the community and the individual believers must shun Covenant-breakers even as the Master's Testament so strongly commands.

AMERICAN HANDS OF THE CAUSE

Paul E. Haney

Horace Holley

Corinne True Wilmette, Illinois

January 14, 1958

Sohrab arrives in Frankfurt

Comments

January 14. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The believers ought to give the Message even to those who do not seem to be ready for it, because they can never judge the real extent to which the Word of God can influence the hearts and minds of the people ..."

January 14. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The believers ought to give the Message even to those who do not seem to be ready for it, because they can never judge the real extent to which the Word of God can influence the hearts and minds of the people, even those who appear to lack any power of receptivity to the Teachings."

> *1950. The believers ought to give the Message even to those who do not seem to be ready for it, because they can never judge the real extent to which the Word of God can influence the hearts and minds of the people, even those who appear to lack any power of receptivity to the Teachings.*

> *(From a letter dated 14 January 1938 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)*

Comments

January 14. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote an individual who had "requested a specific list of human rights that Bahá'ís believe in" including "an enclosure with extracts on the subject of human rights."

Original file: 0328.html (position #97)

January 14. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote an individual who had "requested a specific list of human rights that Bahá'ís believe in" including "an enclosure with extracts on the subject of human rights."

Human Rights in the Bahá'í Writings 2001-01-14 1. Questions to the House of Justice Date: 10 September 2000 From: Ed Price In recent discussions with friends of mine two questions have come up for which no one seemed to have precise answers. Since I have not been able to find explicit answers in the Writings that I have available, I would like to ask for your guidance please.

First, although I think it is a self-evident fact that the Bahá'í Faith upholds human rights, no one I know can provide a specific list of human rights that we believe in. Is there such a list of human rights we uphold? Even if the list cannot be made exhaustive at present for

some reason, is there some core list of human rights that we can all agree upon as upheld by the Bahá'í Faith? ....

1. Response from the House 14 January 2001 Transmitted by email Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email of 10 September 2000.

You have requested a specific list of human rights that Bahá'ís believe in. Although the House of Justice does not maintain such a list, we can inform you that the Bahá'í International Community has always stated publicly its support of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. You may find it helpful to read the article "The Human Rights Discourse: A Bahá'í Perspective", which was published in the 1996-97 edition of The Bahá'í World. As requested, we are providing an enclosure with extracts on the subject of human rights from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi. ...

With loving Bahá'í greetings, Department of the Secretariat 3. Enclosure (compilation) From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself. Verily, such a man is reckoned, by virtue of the Will of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, with the people of Bahá who dwell in the Crimson Ark. (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), p. 71) [1]

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983), p. 215) [2]

Illumine and hallow your hearts; let them not be profaned by the thorns of hate or the thistles of malice. Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindliness and love. (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 334) [3]

O SON OF SPIRIT! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee.. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving kindness. Set it then before thine eyes. (The Hidden Words (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing

Trust, 1990), pp. 3-4) [4]

From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Although the body politic is one family yet because of lack of harmonious relations some members are comfortable and some in direst misery, some members are satisfied and some are hungry, some members are clothed in most costly garments and some families are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this family lacks the necessary reciprocity and symmetry. This household is not well arranged. This household is not living under a perfect law. All the laws which are legislated do not ensure happiness. They do not provide comfort. Therefore a law must be given to this family by means of which all the members of this family will enjoy equal well-being and happiness....

First and foremost is the principle that to all the members of the body politic shall be given the greatest achievements of the world of humanity. Each one shall have the utmost welfare and well-being....

God is not partial and is no respecter of persons. He has made provision for all. The harvest comes forth for everyone. The rain showers upon everybody and the heat of the sun is destined to warm everyone. The verdure of the earth is for everyone. Therefore there should be for all humanity the utmost happiness, the utmost comfort, the utmost well-being. (Foundations of World Unity (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1945), pp. 38-41) [5]

Bahá'u'lláh taught that an equal standard of human rights must be recognized and adopted. In the estimation of God all men are equal; there is no distinction or preferment for any soul in the dominion of His justice and equity. (The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912 rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 182) [6]

From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi

With reference to the absolute pacifists, or conscientious objectors to war: their attitude, judged from the Bahá'í standpoint, is quite antisocial, and due to its exaltation of the individual conscience leads inevitably to disorder and chaos in society. Extreme pacifists are thus very close to the anarchists, in the sense that both of these groups lay an undue emphasis on the rights and merits of the individual. The Bahá'í conception of social life is essentially based on the principle of the subordination of the individual will to that of society. It neither suppresses the individual nor does it exalt him to the point of making him an antisocial creature, a menace to society. As in everything, it follows the "golden

mean". The only way that society can function is for the minority to follow the will of the majority. (21 November 1935 to an individual believer) [7]

But, of course, this extension of assistance to the poor, in whatever form, should under no circumstances be allowed to seriously interfere with the major collective interests of the Bahá'í community, as distinguished from the purely personal interests of its members. The demands of the Cause transcend those of the individual, and should therefore be given precedence. But these two phases of Bahá'í social life, though not of equal importance, are by no means contradictory. Both of them are essential, and should be fostered, but each according to its own degree of importance. It is the responsibility of Bahá'í Assemblies to decide when individual interests should be subordinated to those affecting the collective welfare of the community. But, as already stated, the interests of the individual should always be safeguarded within certain limits, and provided they do not seriously affect the welfare of the group as a whole. (26 June 1936 to an individual believer) [8]

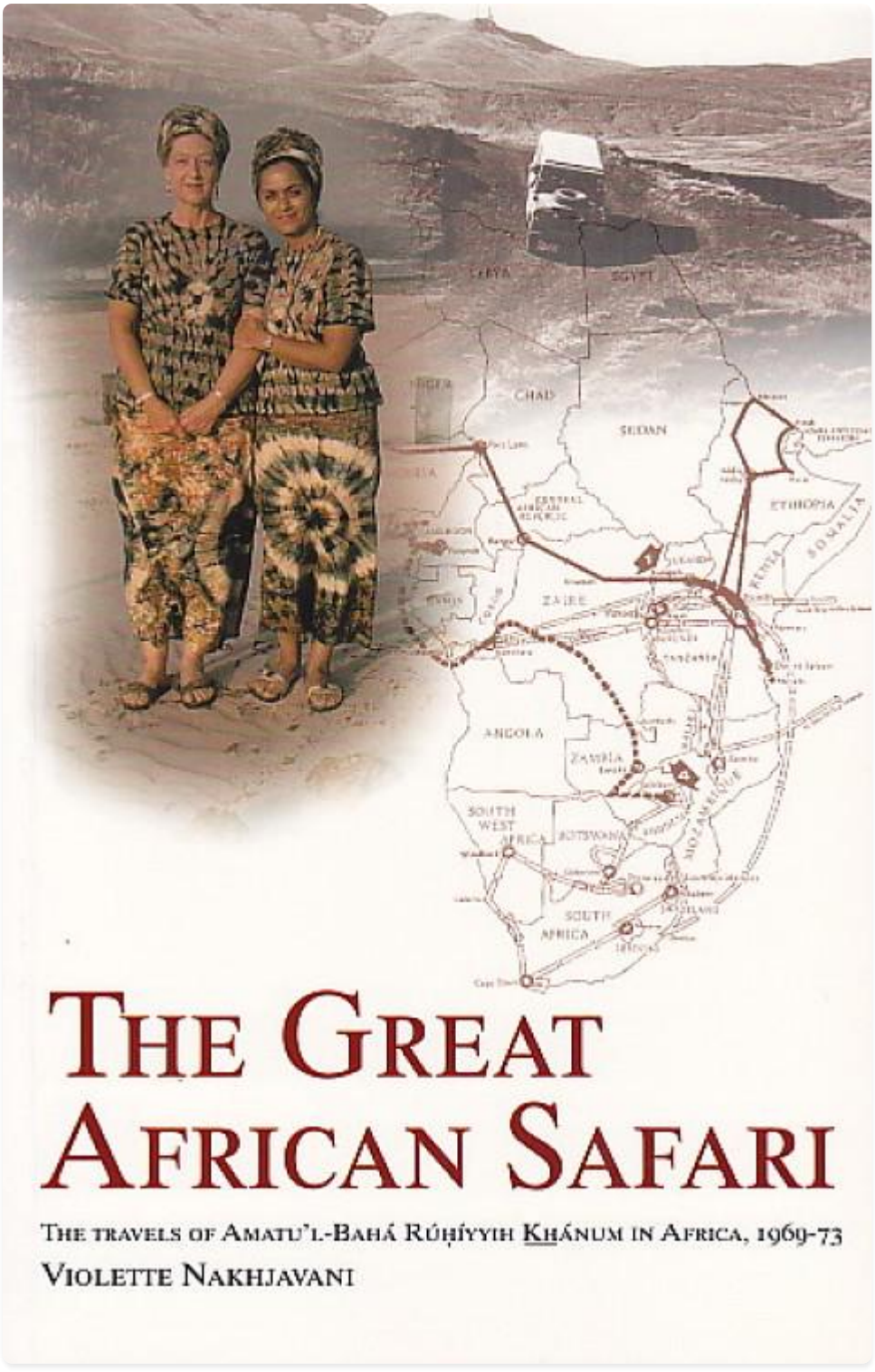
As regards your question about Bahá'í legislative bodies of the future: this is a matter which will have to be decided upon when the question arises, which of course may not be for some time. Of one thing we can be sure — that the rights of non-Bahá'ís will always be very carefully safeguarded and cherished; far more so than the rights of minorities are under any present social system. (22 February 1956 to an individual believer) [9]

Comments

January 14. On this date in 1973, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum left Goma in the Congo and entered Rwanda, accompanied by Ola Pawlowska, during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's "The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum".

Original file: 0327.html (position #96)

January 14. On this date in 1973, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum left Goma in the Conga and entered Rwanda during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's *The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum*. From Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957 until her own death in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum traveled to over 185 countries and territories.


LIBYA
EGYPT
CHAD
SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
SOMALIA
ZAIRE
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
SOUTH WEST AFRICA
BOTSWANA
SOUTH AFRICA
THE GREAT AFRICAN SAFARI
THE TRAVELS OF AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚḤÍYYIH KHÁNUM IN AFRICA, 1969-73
VIOLETTE NAKHJAVANI

Comments

January 14. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice sent a cablegram announcing the purchase of Abdullah Pasha's mansion in Acre, where 'Abdu’l-Bahá lived and Shoghi Effendi was born.

January 14. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice sent a cablegram announcing the purchase of Abdullah Pasha's mansion in Acre, where 'Abdu’l-Bahá lived and Shoghi Effendi was born.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *14 January 1975*
>
> *To all National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *JOYOUSLY ANNOUNCE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION LENGTHY DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS RESULTING ACQUISITION BY PURCHASE HOLY HOUSE CENTER COVENANT ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ BIRTHPLACE BELOVED GUARDIAN SHOGHI EFFENDI. HISTORIC PROPERTY ADJACENT BARRACKS MOST GREAT PRISON COMPRISES LAND AREA APPROXIMATING SEVEN*

> *THOUSAND SQUARE METERS INCLUDES OTHER STRUCTURES WITHIN COMPLEX ASSURING PERMANENT PROTECTION HOUSE VISITED BY MANY PILGRIMS TURN CENTURY SCENE HISTORIC VISIT FIRST GROUP WESTERN PILGRIMS. PLANS BEING PREPARED RESTORATION HOLY HOUSE BEAUTIFICATION GROUNDS AS ADDITIONAL PLACE PILGRIMAGE WORLD CENTER WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES FUNDS PERMIT. OFFER HUMBLE THANKSGIVING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH THIS GREAT BLESSING.*
>
> *UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE*

Comments

January 14. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh married the first and second wives while He was still in Tihrán, and the third wife while He was in Baghdád. At that time, the Laws of the "Aqdas" had not been revealed..."

Original file: 0325.html (position #94)

January 14. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'u'lláh married the first and second wives while He was still in Tihrán, and the third wife while He was in Baghdád. At that time, the Laws of the "Aqdas" had not been revealed, and secondly, He was following the Laws of the previous Dispensation and the customs of the people of His own land."

> *...Bahá'u'lláh married the first and second wives while He was still in Tihrán, and the third wife while He was in Baghdád. At that time, the Laws of the "Aqdas" had not been revealed, and secondly, He was following the Laws of the previous Dispensation and the customs of the people of His own land.*
>
> *(14 January 1953 to an individual believer)*

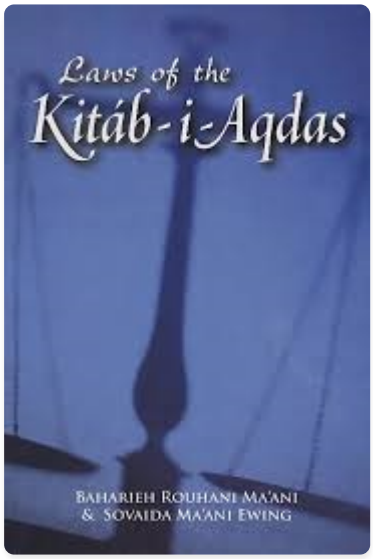
Bahá'u'lláh was 18 years old when he married his first wife, Ásíyih, who was fifteen years old. Bahá'u'lláh became a Bábí in 1844, at the age of 27, and Ásíyih became a Bábí that same year at the age of 23.

Bahá'u'lláh's second wife, Fatimih, was twenty years old when she married Bahá'u'lláh in 1849.

In 1862, Bahá'u'lláh married his third wife, Gawhar, who was actually a servant of his first wife Ásíyih. The age at marriage of Gawhar is unknown.

At the time Bahá'u'lláh married Fatimih in 1849 and Gawhar in 1862, he was a Bábí and subject to the laws of the Bayan. At the time of his marriage to his third wife, Gawhar, he continued to have children with his second wife, Fatimih. While there is no English translation of the Persian Bayan, there is a French translation which addresses this topic...

> *Bayan Persan - UNITE 7 - PORTE 15*
>
> *Dans ceci qu'il est obligatoire pour un chacun de prendre une femme afin que reste de lui quelqu'un qui unifie Dieu, son Seigneur. Certes il faut s'efforcer d'avoir un enfant (ou de se marier). Si se manifeste d'un homme ou d'une femme l'impuissance à avoir un enfant, il est licite pour l'époux non impuissant (quel qu'il soit) de se remarier à nouveau après en avoir obtenu l'autorisation de l'autre partie, mais non sans sa permission. Et ce afin que se manifeste de cet époux ou de cette épouse un enfant.*



Comments

January 14. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the existing religions of the world...have no coherent program upon which they are united, the Movement is rich with the very spirit and teachings the world needs for solving its present international problems...."

Original file: 0324.html (position #93)

January 14. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "the existing religions of the world...have no coherent program upon which they are united, the Movement is rich with the very spirit and teachings the world needs for solving its present international problems...."

> *1706. Primary Importance of the Cause Among Existing Religions*

> *"The primary importance of the Cause among the existing religions of the world is that, whereas the others have no coherent program upon which they are united, the Movement is rich with the very spirit and teachings the world needs for solving its present international problems...."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 14, 1932: Bahá'í News, No. 59, February 1932, p. 2)*

Comments

January 14. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "With the appearance of every Revelation a new insight is created in man and this in turn expresses itself in the growth of science...With the spiritual awakening of man this force will develop and marvelous results will become manifest."

Original file: 0323.html (position #92)

January 14. On this date in 1932, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Abdu'l-Bahá does often state that the medical science will much improve. With the appearance of every Revelation a new insight is created in man and this in turn expresses itself in the growth of science. This has happened in past dispensations and we find its earliest fruits in our present day. What we see however is only the beginning. With the spiritual awakening of man this force will develop and marvelous results will become manifest."

> *972. Medical Science Will Greatly Improve with the Spiritual Awakening of Man*

> *"Abdu'l-Bahá does often state that the medical science will much improve. With the appearance of every Revelation a new insight is created in man and this in turn expresses itself in the growth of science. This has happened in past dispensations and we find its earliest fruits in our present day. What we see however is only the beginning. With the spiritual awakening of man this force will develop and marvelous results will become manifest."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 14, 1932: Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health, Healing, Nutrition and Related Matters, April 1984, p. 10)*

Comments

January 14. On this date in 1870, May Maxwell was born in Englewood, New Jersey. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell who designed the Shrine of the Báb and was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

Original file: 0322.html (position #91)

January 14. On this date in 1870, May Maxwell was born in Englewood, New Jersey. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell, who designed the Shrine of the Báb, and was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

The Sutherland's were active Bahá'ís throughout their lives. For example, on September 2, 1912, during his tour of North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Maxwell's Montreal

home where he presented his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America.

May Maxwell died on March 1, 1940, of a heart attack in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she was teaching the Faith. Shoghi Effendi, her son-in-law, gave her the status of martyr.

On May 12 1943, Shoghi Effendi cabled Argentine Bahá'ís he was "delighted (at the) completion (and) dedication (of the) Maxwell Memorial.

> *111-Completion and Dedication of Maxwell Memorial*
>
> *12 MAY 1943*
>
> *DELIGHTED COMPLETION DEDICATION MAXWELL MEMORIAL SYMBOLIC ACT NOBLY CONSUMMATED CONVEY BUENOS AIRES ASSEMBLY CONGRATULATIONS GRATITUDE ASSURANCE LOVING PRAYERS SPIRITUAL PARTICIPATION HISTORIC CEREMONY. APPRECIATE PHOTOGRAPHS DEDICATION GATHERING.*

Shortly after May Maxwell's death in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 1, 1940, plans were made for the construction of a memorial at her gravesite. Designed by her husband, William Sutherland Maxwell, and approved by Shoghi Effendi, the memorial was dedicated on May 10, 1943 by the Bahá'ís of Buenos Aires at Quilmes Cemetery on behalf of the Bahá'ís of North an south America.

Comments

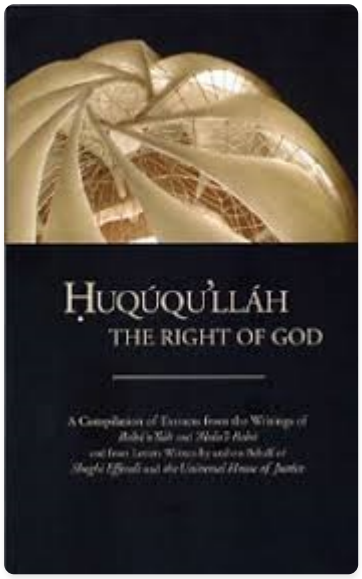
January 15. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In accordance with the explicit text of the Will and Testament, Huqúqu’lláh should be expended on teaching the Cause of God in countries throughout the East and the West, establishing institutions, building Bahá’í Temples and promoting ..."

Original file: 0321.html (position #90)

January 15. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In accordance with the explicit text of the Will and Testament, Huqúqu’lláh should be expended on teaching the Cause of God in countries throughout the East and the West, establishing institutions, building Bahá’í Temples and promoting benevolent undertakings and the general weal."

> *In accordance with the explicit text of the Will and Testament, Huqúqu’lláh should*

> *be expended on teaching the Cause of God in countries throughout the East and the West, establishing institutions, building Bahá'í Temples and promoting benevolent undertakings and the general weal.*
>
> *(15 January 1933, to a National Spiritual Assembly, translated from the Persian)*



Comments

January 15. On this date in 1950, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States instituted the first celebration of World Religion Day to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting. World Religion Day is observed annually on the third Sunday in January.

January 15. On this date in 1950, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States instituted the first celebration of World Religion Day to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting. World Religion Day is observed annually on the third Sunday in January.

On October 22, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago stated, "Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of **World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the**

need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself. Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States, **the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.**"

> *1710. World Religion Day, Purpose of*
>
> *Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of* ***World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself.*** *Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States,* ***the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.*** *In practice, there is no harm in the Bahá'í communities' inviting the persons of other religions to share their platforms on this Day,* ***providing the universality of the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfillment of the hopes of mankind for a universal religion are clearly brought forth.****"*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago, October 22, 1968)*

On April 11, 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of the U.S. about some of the restrictions on worship in a Bahá'í Temple, including prohibitions on congregational prayer, the presence of images, giving sermons, or the use of instruments.

> *2061. Worship in Temple*
>
> *"As regard the whole question of the Temple and services held in it: He wishes to emphasize that he is very anxious, now that this first and greatest Temple of the West has been built, and will, within a few years, be used for worship and regular services by the Bahá'ís, that no forms, no rituals, no set customs be introduced over and above the bare minimum outlined in the teachings. The nature of these gatherings is for prayer, meditation and the reading of writings from the Sacred*

> *Scriptures of our Faith and other Faiths; there can be one or a number of readers; any Bahá'í chosen, or even, non-Bahá'í, may read. The gatherings should be simple, dignified, and designed to uplift the soul and educate it through hearing the Creative Word. No speeches may be made, no extraneous matter introduced.*
>
> *"The use of pulpits is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh: if, in order to be more clearly heard, the person stands on a low platform, there is no objection, but this should not be incorporated as an architectural feature of the building....*
>
> *"Vocal music alone may be used and the position of the singers or singer is also a matter for your Assembly to decide; but again, there should be no fixed point, no architectural details marking a special spot. Acoustics should certainly be the main consideration in placing the singers."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 11, 1947: Insert with Bahá'í News, No. 232, June 1950)*

These prohibitions have often led to confusion and misunderstanding because the Temples are often represented as being "open to all religions," when in fact they are open to members of all religions, but certainly not to all religions.

For example, one Unitarian minister was prevented from reading the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., leading him to "express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection was not acceptable and that, as he put it in his letter to the Assembly, he must read from "a world scripture such as the Holy Bible, or Koran, etc., or not at all."

"How would you like," he wrote, "to be asked to participate in a world religion day and then be told that the host required you to read what he defined to be your scriptures, rather than you being able to read from what you felt represented your holy writings?""

You cannot have a Catholic mass, contemporary Christian worship, congregational Muslim salaat, or Hindu puja in the Bahá'í Temple.

The article concerning the Unitarian minister's experience is as follows...

Saturday, August 18, 2007

Unity - As We See It

On January 9, 1985, the Rev. Tom Hansen, ***a Unitarian Universalist minister****—I do not use his real name—wrote to the spiritual assembly of the Bahá'ís of Wilmette, Illinois, to* ***express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection was not acceptable and that, as he put it in his letter to the Assembly, he must read from "a world scripture such as the Holy Bible, or Koran, etc., or not at all."***

"How would you like," he wrote, "to be asked to participate in a world religion day and then be told that the host required you to read what he defined to be your scriptures, rather than you being able to read from what you felt represented your holy writings?"

The letter is a page-and-a-half of single-spaced type. It is pointed, challenging, and painful.

I wonder if in clinging to decisions of Bahá'í leadership of decades ago you realize that you are denigrating other faiths in holding a world religious [sic] day and then not permitting your guest faiths to designate their readings to be what they call holy scriptures rather than going by your outmoded past? You are denying our beliefs, heritage, and scriptures, in saying, "We Bahá'ís have decided what is scriptural for you. We deny you the right, in our setting, to call scripture what you say is holy. You cannot read what is a true representation of your thinking in our world religious [sic] day. You are limited to what we Bahá'ís, or other authorities of the past century, call holy scripture. If you don't agree that we are right about what is scriptural for you, and read from those books we limit you to, then you are excluded from our service."

The letter passed from the Wilmette spiritual assembly to Bruce Whitmore at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Whitmore contacted Rev. Hansen by phone and sent a follow-up letter of apology with a copy of his own book on the building of the House of Worship as a gift. Whitmore wrote in his letter, "Although it may not be possible for us to change the directives which govern our devotional services, be

assured that we will make certain that neither we nor Bahá'í communities planning programs at the House of Worship offend any other religious community, even inadvertently."

Rev. Hansen read the book and delivered a sermon entitled "How the Bahá'ís Built their Temple." Then he wrote back to Mr. Whitmore on February 7. He quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Rúhíyyih Khánum from Mr. Whitmore's book to "suggest that your whole movement reexamine their position about limiting the readings allowed in the main room of the temple." He added his own emphasis to the quotes by underlining words and phrases such as unity, every, agreement, unfettered, all creeds, Unity of His Prophets, and Unity of Mankind. ***"Are you willing to hear from a Unitarian Universalist prophet," he challenged, "or are we for some reason not included in that unity. And are we a part of the unity of mankind, or not?" He closed the letter with a minor factual correction to Mr. Whitmore's book and thanks for Whitmore's "big spirited attitude."***

I found this correspondence while doing research at the U.S. Bahá'í National archives in Wilmette. It originally interested me because it illustrates, I believe, the dissonance between the public image of the Bahá'í Faith and the more insular, restrictive, and conservative practice of the Faith. The former understandably led Rev. Hansen to believe that "in truth there is no faith in this community closer to yours than the Unitarian-Universalist religion" (first letter, to Assembly); the latter leads me to think that beneath the surface the two are more opposite than alike.

The dissonance I want to look at now, though, is that between the feeling of accepting all faiths that the doctrine of progressive revelation gives so many Bahá'ís and the meaning which that doctrine has when expressed or acted on in an interfaith context.

In his book Music, Devotions, and Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (1987), R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram documents the transformation in American Bahá'í consciousness of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár from a place for Bahá'ís to worship locally, as envisioned originally in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, to its role as "silent teacher." Armstrong-Ingram does not discuss the early American Bahá'ís' understanding of progressive revelation and how it influenced that process. But I suspect it did, because the House of Worship has come to be understood primarily

as a physical and public means of relating to non-Bahá'ís religiously—naively so, I would say. In the last chapter of his book, Armstrong-Ingram quotes Hatcher and Martin:

At the present time, the houses of worship are not principally used for Bahá'í community services. Rather, they are opened as places where individuals of all religious backgrounds (or those professing no particular faith) meet in the worship of the one God. Services are nondenominational and consist of readings and prayers from the scriptures of the world's faiths, with no sermons or other attempts to cast these teachings in a mold of a specifically Bahá'í interpretation.

This passage deserves its own essay to unpack its multi-dimensional naiveté and self-deception; I quote it here simply as an example of the disappearance of the doctrinal assumptions underlying devotional practices at the House of Worship behind a claim of non-denominationality.

Progressive revelation is not just a belief in the shared divine origin of the world's religions, which is the aspect of the teaching that is built into the temple. *The general scheme of architecture that all Bahá'í houses of worship share—nine doors and nine sides—symbolizes unity. And the Wilmette House of Worship, in particular, sports the symbols of other major world religions cast into its decorative concrete exterior. The doctrine also includes the conception that God communicates episodically with humanity through perfect teachers. Their revelations have become the scriptures which are now the only accepted readings in the auditoriums of Bahá'í houses of worship. There is nothing neutral or nondenominational about this point of view; it is particularly Bahá'í, though some other faiths have related doctrines. How could Rev. Hansen and his rejected twentieth-century Unitarian writings fit into this scheme? As part of the human corruption and decline of the revelation of Christ and its disintegration into schism?*

So we find Mr. Whitmore caught between the directives for worship in the auditorium, which have their roots in this specifically Bahá'í concept of progressive revelation, and the desire to experience fellowship and unity with people of other faiths. How, I wonder, did he think they would avoid offending "any other religious community, even inadvertently"? By not holding interfaith services in the Auditorium? By not inviting Unitarians? Making the rules clear up front might have helped. But the offense seems almost bound to have been repeated in some

form, so long as the building continued to be seen by Bahá'ís as a place for all to worship—on Bahá'í terms.

I imagine the Bahá'ís involved were startled by Rev. Hansen's response. But the invitation they had issued was not really one to come together as equals and peers*—it couldn't be, because the rules governing the use of the auditorium had, and still have, a specific bias.* ***It was an invitation to participate in a Bahá'í conception of the oneness of religion. The Bahá'ís involved stumbled into this awkward situation because they believed they were doing one thing when in fact they were doing another.*** *Progressive revelation is not a bright, universally obvious umbrella under which all religions can happily gather; it is a doctrine of one particular religion.* ***Bahá'ís need to recognize its limitations as a basis for interfaith relationships.***

Seven years ago I moved away from the vicinity of the House of Worship, so I can't speak for any recent developments, except to praise the presence of Van Gilmer as music director. I do know, though, that ***there has been a long history of frustration and dissatisfaction with devotional activity at the House of Worship.*** *I think that both Bahá'ís and people of other faiths will find more pleasure in worship there when the understanding of the place reverts to that originally intended by Bahá'u'lláh—a place for Bahá'ís to worship, though one with open doors.*

Also, judging at least from Armstrong-Ingram's book, a fresh engagement with Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings on the subject might yield a devotional practice more various and engaging than the one which has dominated the House of Worship's history.

It would also be more distinctively Bahá'í than the historical one. I think that would be a good thing.

Comments

January 15. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote World War II "will throw down the barriers that hinder the emergence of that world community which the World Religion of Bahá'u'lláh has anticipated and can alone permanently establish."

Original file: 0319.html (position #88)

January 15. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote World War II "will throw down the barriers that hinder the emergence of that world community which the World Religion of Bahá'u'lláh has anticipated and can alone permanently establish" and the U.S. entry into the war "marks a milestone on the road which must lead the peoples of the North American continent to the glorious destiny that awaits them."

> *90-A Truly World-Embracing Crisis*
>
> *15 JANUARY 1942*
>
> ***The entry of the United States of America into the war invests it with the character of a truly world-embracing crisis, designed to release***

world-shaking, world-shaping forces, which, as they operate, and mount in intensity, will throw down the barriers that hinder the emergence of that world community which the World Religion of Bahá'u'lláh has anticipated and can alone permanently establish. It marks a milestone on the road which must lead the peoples of the North American continent to the glorious destiny that awaits them. *It confronts the American Bahá'í community, already so well advanced in the prosecution of their Seven Year Plan, with a challenge at once severe and inescapable. The exterior ornamentation of their consecrated Edifice has been providentially expedited to a point where its completion is now assured. The intercontinental and national teaching campaigns, that constitute the second and even more vital aspect of that plan, though progressing magnificently in the States, in Canada and throughout Latin America, are still far from having attained their consummation. The obstacles which the extension of the war to the Western Hemisphere has raised are, I am well aware, manifold and formidable. The heroic self-sacrifice exhibited by the North American Bahá'í community will, I am confident, surmount them. The Hand of Omnipotence, which has led so mighty a member of the human race to plunge into the turmoil of world disaster, that has provided thereby the means for the effective and decisive participation of so promising a nation in the immediate trials and the future reconstruction of human society, will not and cannot allow those who are directly, consciously and worthily promoting the highest interests of their nation and of the world to fall short of the accomplishment of their God-given task. He will, more than ever before in their history, pour out His blessings upon them, if they refuse to allow the present circumstances, grievous though they are, to interfere with the full and uninterrupted execution of this initial undertaking in pursuance of their world Mission. The coming two years must witness, fraught as they may well be with the greatest ordeal afflicting their countrymen, a manifestation of spiritual vitality and an output of heroic action, commensurate with the gravity and afflictions of the present hour, and worthy of the concluding years of the first Bahá'í century.*

Comments

January 15. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote the U.S. entry into World War II "marks a milestone on the road which must lead the peoples of the North American continent to the glorious destiny that awaits them."

Original file: 0318.html (position #87)

January 15. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote World War II "will throw down the barriers that hinder the emergence of that world community which the World Religion of Bahá'u'lláh has anticipated and can alone permanently establish" and the U.S. entry into the war "marks a milestone on the road which must lead the peoples of the North American continent to the glorious destiny that awaits them."

> *90-A Truly World-Embracing Crisis*
>
> *15 JANUARY 1942*
>
> ***The entry of the United States of America into the war invests it with the character of a truly world-embracing crisis, designed to release***

world-shaking, world-shaping forces, which, as they operate, and mount in intensity, will throw down the barriers that hinder the emergence of that world community which the World Religion of Bahá'u'lláh has anticipated and can alone permanently establish. It marks a milestone on the road which must lead the peoples of the North American continent to the glorious destiny that awaits them. *It confronts the American Bahá'í community, already so well advanced in the prosecution of their Seven Year Plan, with a challenge at once severe and inescapable. The exterior ornamentation of their consecrated Edifice has been providentially expedited to a point where its completion is now assured. The intercontinental and national teaching campaigns, that constitute the second and even more vital aspect of that plan, though progressing magnificently in the States, in Canada and throughout Latin America, are still far from having attained their consummation. The obstacles which the extension of the war to the Western Hemisphere has raised are, I am well aware, manifold and formidable. The heroic self-sacrifice exhibited by the North American Bahá'í community will, I am confident, surmount them. The Hand of Omnipotence, which has led so mighty a member of the human race to plunge into the turmoil of world disaster, that has provided thereby the means for the effective and decisive participation of so promising a nation in the immediate trials and the future reconstruction of human society, will not and cannot allow those who are directly, consciously and worthily promoting the highest interests of their nation and of the world to fall short of the accomplishment of their God-given task. He will, more than ever before in their history, pour out His blessings upon them, if they refuse to allow the present circumstances, grievous though they are, to interfere with the full and uninterrupted execution of this initial undertaking in pursuance of their world Mission. The coming two years must witness, fraught as they may well be with the greatest ordeal afflicting their countrymen, a manifestation of spiritual vitality and an output of heroic action, commensurate with the gravity and afflictions of the present hour, and worthy of the concluding years of the first Bahá'í century.*

Comments

January 15. On this date in 1998, Artemus Lamb, an American Bahá'í who pioneered to South and Central America, and served as a Counsellor from 1968 to 1985, died in El Salvador.

January 15. On this date in 1998, Artemus Lamb, an American Bahá'í who pioneered to South and Central America, and served as a Counsellor from 1968 to 1985, died in El Salvador.

Comments

January 16. On this date in 1922, Bahíyyih Khánum cabled the Bahá'í community of the United States notifying it "In Will Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of Cause and Head of House of Justice. Inform American friends."

Original file: 0316.html (position #85)

January 16. On this date in 1922, Bahíyyih Khánum cabled the Bahá'í community of the United States notifying it "In Will Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of Cause and Head of House of Justice. Inform American friends."

> *24: IN WILL SHOGHI EFFENDI APPOINTED GUARDIAN ...*
>
> *IN WILL SHOGHI EFFENDI APPOINTED GUARDIAN OF CAUSE AND HEAD OF HOUSE OF JUSTICE. INFORM AMERICAN FRIENDS. GREATEST HOLY LEAF.*

From *The Life of Shoghi Effendi* by Helen Danesh, John Danesh, and Amelia Danesh published in Studying the Writings of Shoghi Effendi, ed. M. Bergsmo. Oxford: George

Ronald, 1991...

> *On 7 January 1922 Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, cabled the Bahá'ís of Iran telling them that Shoghi Effendi was the centre of the Cause; the Bahá'í community of the United States was cabled nine days later on 16 January 1922.*

From Chapter 2 in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and its Immediate Consequences"...

> *It was befitting that the Greatest Holy Leaf, and not Shoghi Effendi himself, should announce to the Bahá'í world the provisions of the Master's Will. On 7 January she sent two cables to Persia as follows: "Memorial meetings all over the world have been held. The Lord of all the worlds in His Will and Testament has revealed His instructions. Copy will be sent. Inform believers." and "Will and Testament forwarded Shoghi Effendi Centre Cause." It is significant to recall that 'Abdu'l-Bahá - no doubt in anticipation of events He clearly foresaw - had, in answer to a query from the Tehran Assembly written to them: "You have asked in whose name the real estate and buildings donated should be registered with the Government and the legal deeds issued: they should be registered in the name of Mirza Shoghi Rabbani, who is the son of Mirza Hadi Shirazi and is in London." However great the grief and shock the Master's ascension produced in Persia it is unlikely that the news of Shoghi Effendi's appointment came as much of a surprise to the more informed amongst the friends there, especially after having so recently received such an illuminating [page 48] instruction from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. To the United States the Greatest Holy Leaf cabled on 16 January: "In Will Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of Cause and Head of House of Justice. Inform American friends." In spite of the fact that from the very beginning Shoghi Effendi exhibited both a tactful and masterful hand in dealing with the problems that continually faced him, he leaned very heavily on the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose character, station and love for him made her at once his support and his refuge.*

Comments

January 16. On this date in 1922, less than two months after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine, who would recognize its receipt in a letter addressed to Shoghi Effendi one week later, on January 24, 1922.

Original file: 0315.html (position #84)

January 16. On this date in 1922, less than two months after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine, who would recognize its receipt in a letter addressed to Shoghi Effendi one week later, on January 24, 1922.

On January 24, 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá

Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*. As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

> *While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine,* ***Sir Herbert Samuel****, dated 24 January 1922:*
>
> > *Dear Mr. Rabbani,*
> >
> > *I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.*
> >
> > *Yours sincerely,*
> >
> > *Herbert Samuel*

Comments

January 16. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote "to the Bahá'ís of the World" regarding the beginning of the fifth epoch of the Formative Age.

Original file: 0314.html (position #83)

January 16. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote "to the Bahá'ís of the World" regarding the beginning of the fifth epoch of the Formative Age.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *16 January 2001*
>
> *To the Bahá'ís of the World*
>
> *Dearly loved Friends,*
>
> *As we write you this message, the Conference of the Continental Counselors approaches a triumphant conclusion.*
>
> *For eight days the Counselors from all the continents have consulted on the next phase of the process of entry by troops. While they were meeting during the first five days, 849 members of their Auxiliary Boards from 172 countries were arriving at the Bahá'í World Centre and paying their respects at the Holy Shrines in*

anticipation of the moment when they would all come together in a series of soul-stirring events: ascent of the newly built Terraces on Mount Carmel; circumambulation of the Shrine of the Báb; procession along the Arc path for a visit to the International Teaching Centre Building; a devotional ceremony to mark the occupation by the Teaching Center of its permanent seat; and subsequent joint consultations concerning their indispensable role in the Five Year Plan on which the Bahá'í world will embark at Riḍván 2001.

The deliberations of the Counselors themselves have been the heart of these stupendous activities. Their consultations have been marked by a combination of sobriety and effervescence that has refined the character of their discussions and illumined understanding. It is clear from the confident atmosphere in which they have conferred that their institution has reached a new stage in its maturation. Even though they function principally as individuals, the Counselors across all Boards have become of one mind. By internalizing and integrating the lessons and experiences of systematization called for in the Four Year Plan, they have indeed been transformed into channels of unified thought. We appreciate that the new height in the evolution of their institution is a reflection, too, of the measure to which, with their wise and constant advice, the Spiritual Assemblies and other institutions of the world community have evolved.

As the time for the Conference drew near, there were signs that the Faith had arrived at a point in its development beyond which a new horizon opens before us. Such intimations were communicated in our report last Riḍván of the change in culture of the Bahá'í community as training institutes emerged, as the construction projects on Mount Carmel approached their completion, and as the internal processes of institutional consolidation and the external processes towards world unity became more fully synchronized. They were elaborated in the message we addressed to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors a few days ago. But the extraordinary dynamics at work throughout the Conference crystallized these indications into a recognizable reality. With a spirit of exultation we are moved to announce to you: the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh now enters the fifth epoch of its Formative Age.

Recognition of this milestone falls within the patterns established by Shoghi Effendi for marking measures of time in the history of the Cause; he foresaw among these a succession of epochs occurring in the Formative Age. It must fill every devoted follower of Bahá'u'lláh with joy and wonder that His Administrative Order has

reached so important a point at so crucial a time, when so many members of the institution of the Counselors are gathered in splendid array at the World Center of His Faith. They will return to the far corners of the earth as torches aflame with the spirit of service. That they will pour fresh energy into their activities, there can be no doubt. Their efforts will surely widen the path leading to the success of the Twelve Month Plan, and through that to the launching at Riḍván of the five year enterprise that will be the first in a series of Plans to be pursued until the centenary of the Formative Age.

The Counselors will leave here anticipating their early consultations with National Spiritual Assemblies regarding the operation in their countries of the forthcoming Plan. With the involvement of their eager auxiliaries, they will assist, too, in quickly moving the requisite planning process to regional and local areas of the community in every land.

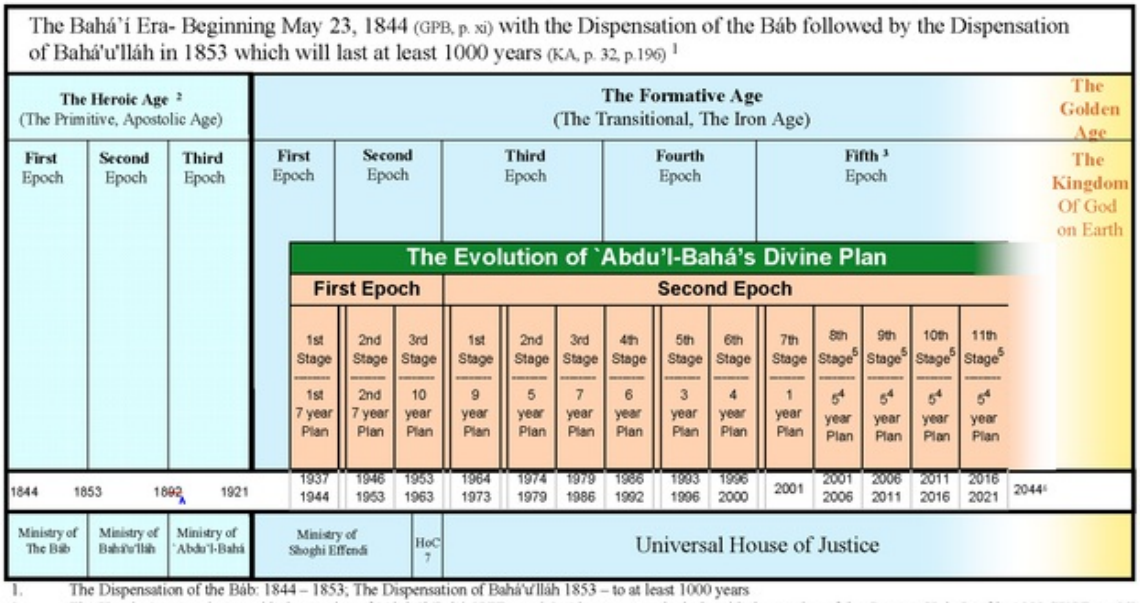
In the waning moments of these eventful days, our hearts are turned in humble gratitude to the Ancient Beauty for the abundance of the blessings He has bestowed. The very earth of Carmel is astir with the wonders of His grace as she responds to the redemptive call He raised in the Tablet bearing her name. His fervent wish expressed therein resounds in the souls of His lovers throughout the planet: "Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation...." The friends now gathered amid the splendor at Carmel's heart have heard it with new ears and have reaffirmed their pledge to respond to this divine longing. May their exploits in the Name of Bahá scatter more widely the fragrance of His Revelation, strengthen more firmly the foundation of His institutions, and embolden more resolutely the activities of His worldwide community, impelling forward the process by which troop after troop will enter into the stronghold of the Ark of Salvation.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 16. On this date in 1931, the dome of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, which was nearing completion, caught fire. Wilmette and Evanston firefighters worked to save the structure, and damage was estimated at $50,000. The temple was eventually dedicated on May 2, 1953.

January 16. On this date in 1931, the dome of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, which was nearing completion, caught fire. Wilmette and Evanston firefighters worked to save the structure, and damage was estimated at $50,000.

'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in Wilmette in 1912 for the ground-breaking ceremony during which he laid the cornerstone.

The actual construction of the building did not begin until 1921, after Bahá'ís agreed to use a design by Louis Bourgeois.

On January 16, 1931, the dome of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, which was nearing completion, caught fire. Wilmette and Evanston firefighters worked to save the structure, and damage was estimated at $50,000.

The temple was eventually dedicated on May 2, 1953.

Comments

January 17. On this date in 2009, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences took place, one in Lae, Papua New Guinea, another in Vancouver, Canada, and another in Managua, Nicaragua.

Original file: 0312.html (position #81)

January 17. On this date in 2009, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Lae, Papua New Guinea, another in Vancouver, Canada, and another in Managua, Nicaragua.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the

Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the

International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco

Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

Comments

January 17. On this date in 1908, Ruth Katherine Meyer was born. She would be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to Margarita Island in 1953.

Original file: 0311.html (position #80)

January 17. On this date in 1908, Ruth Katherine Meyer was born. She would be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to Margarita Island in 1953. "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh" was a title conferred to Bahá'ís who introduced the Bahá'í Faith to new territories during the Ten Year Crusade.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

January 17. On this date in 1961, court-appointed experts in Turkey agreed that the Bahá'í Faith was not a "Tarighat". In 1905, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote the sultan a letter protesting that his followers refrain from involvement in partisan politics and that his tariqa had guided many Americans to Islam.

Original file: 0310.html (position #79)

January 17. On this date in 1961, three court-appointed experts in Turkey agreed that the Bahá'í Faith was not a "Tarighat" although the court later declared on July 15, 1961, that the Bahá'í Faith was a "Tarighat". In 1905, in response to a Commission of Inquiry, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote the sultan a letter protesting that his followers refrain from involvement in partisan politics and that his tariqa had guided many Americans to Islam.

To the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the United States, Canada, the British Isles, Germany, Italy and Switzerland

September 14, 1961

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

As you know, for the last two years ***the Faith has been under attack in Turkey****, starting with the arrest of a number of believers in Ankara during Naw-Rúz of 1959, when the police imprisoned members of the Local Spiritual Assembly. This incident received wide publicity in the press. Subsequently the friends were released from prison, but* ***a court case was brought against the Bahá'ís by the public prosecutor, who claimed that the Faith was a "Tarighat", one of those sects of lslám whose rituals, practices and forms of worship are forbidden by the law of the country****.*

Since then this matter has been the subject of lengthy litigation, with the Bahá'ís endeavouring to prove and establish the status of the Faith as an independent world religion, and the prosecuting authorities endeavouring to classify it as a forbidden sect of lslám.

The case is now to go to the high court on appeal, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Turkey has informed us that they believe that representations to the Turkish Ambassador in your respective countries' would be helpful, as these diplomatic representatives will then inform their government of these visits and the proofs which representatives of your Assembly will present showing the completely independent character of the Faith, as well as its world-wide acceptance as a universal religion completely dissociated from Islám or any other revealed religion.

In order that you may thoroughly understand the background of this situation, we share with you the following summary of the development of the case against the Faith in Turkey.

Following the Turkish revolution in the 1920's, church and state were separated, but the major world religions, including the four recognized schools of thought of Sunni lslám-Maliki, Hanbali, Shafei and Hanafi-were left free to follow their beliefs and practices. However, according to Article 163 of the Turkish Criminal Code, the practice of every form of "Tarighat" was forbidden, and those who indulged in the forbidden rituals and practices of these Muslim sects were subject to severe

punishment. Among these "Tarighat" are included the Naghshbandi, Molvai, Jalali and Refai sects. The Government of modem Turkey felt that the rituals and practices of these sects of Islam were out of place in modern life and harmful to the people; therefore they were forbidden.

It is clear that identification of the Faith with these forbidden sects would be a very bad blow for the Cause and conversely, if a high court of appeal in a Muslim country were to recognize the independent character of the Faith, it would be a very significant victory for the Cause, not only in Turkey, but throughout the East.

The original arrest of the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly in Ankara and the court case which followed resulted in wide publicity for the Cause, and most of the leading newspapers in the country opposed the action of the public prosecutor, and declared that the Faith was an independent religion. At that time many documents were sent to Turkey from the World Centre and from various National Assemblies to establish and prove the independent character of the Cause. The court requested three experts in comparative religion to study the matter and give their opinion. Two of the three experts appointed expressed the view that the Bahá'í Faith was an independent religion, and one claimed that it was a sect of Islam. After receiving this report, the court then appointed three outstanding religious scholars to review all aspects of the question and advise the court of their views. All three of these scholars agreed in a finding that the Faith was an independent religion, and sent a documented statement containing authenticated proofs to the court on January 17, 1961. In this historic document the panel of experts proved that the Cause has nothing to do with "Tarighat" or forbidden sects of Islam, and that it is an independent religion comparable to Islam and Christianity.

After this document was submitted to the court, everyone was certain that the Court would issue its decree in accordance with the findings of these experts. However, the judges chose to disregard these findings entirely, and suddenly on July 15, 1961, declared that the Bahá'í Faith was a "Tarighat". Following this unexpected decision, the Bahá'ís of Ankara were forgiven, on the grounds that their gathering constituted a criminal case and under the general amnesty provisions of the law they could be released, that is, the case against them dropped. The court did say, however, that its decision could be appealed.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Turkey has decided to make a strong appeal to the higher court, and as indicated previously, this National Assembly believes that

proper representations by your bodies to the Turkish Ambassadors in your respective countries will be helpful.

Therefore we request that you appoint without delay a well-qualified delegation composed of Western friends (the effect will be greater if the delegations do not include any of the Persian believers who may be residing in your respective countries) to call upon the Turkish Ambassador, explain your position as national representatives of the Bahá'í Community in your respective countries, *indicate your great interest in a proper and just outcome of the pending case in Turkey, and give explanations and appropriate proofs of the independent character of the Faith and its world-wide scope as a separate revealed religion. In view of the highly nationalistic feelings of the Turkish people, particularly Turkish officials, we suggest that the representations to be made by your representatives do not in any way take the form of a protest. In other words, the approach should be a mild and friendly one, emphasizing the great interest which the Bahá'ís in your countries have in this matter.*

We shall be very much interested in receiving in due course a report on the steps taken to carry out this request from the National Assembly of Turkey. We shall offer ardent prayers in the holy Shrines that all of these efforts will be divinely guided and assisted and that another great victory for the Faith may be won.

1 ***It is specifically requested that in the case of the Italo-Swiss National Assembly, the contact be made with the Turkish Ambassador in Switzerland. We do not believe that a visit to the Ambassador in Italy would be advisable at this time.***

With warm Bahá'í love,

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Comments

January 17. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "It is not within the spirit of Bahá'í law for one to become involved in the announcement of new marriage plans while he or she is still legally married to another. There is no objection to urging the friends not to go so far as to ..."

Original file: 0309.html (position #78)

January 17. On this date in 1971, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Australia "It is not within the spirit of Bahá'í law for one to become involved in the announcement of new marriage plans while he or she is still legally married to another. There is no objection to urging the friends not to go so far as to seek consent of parents before the divorce becomes final in all respects, but no sanctions should be applied to enforce such exhortation."

> *1334. Not Wise to Announce New Marriage Plans Before Divorce is Final*

> *"It is not within the spirit of Bahá'í law for one to become involved in the announcement of new marriage plans while he or she is still legally married to another. There is no objection to urging the friends not to go so far as to seek consent of parents before the divorce becomes final in all respects, but no sanctions should be applied to enforce such exhortation."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, January 17, 1971: Australian Bahá'í Bulletin, No. 198, February 1971, p. 8)*

Comments

January 17. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Australia "The Laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas regarding the period of engagement have not been made applicable to believers in the West, and therefore there is no requirement that the parties to a marriage obtain consent of the parents before...

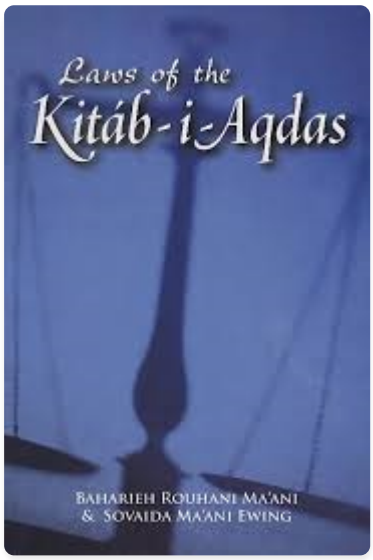
Original file: 0308.html (position #77)

January 17. On this date in 1971, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Australia "The Laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas regarding the period of engagement have not been made applicable to believers in the West, and therefore there is no requirement that the parties to a marriage obtain consent of the parents before announcing their engagement. However, there is no objection to informing the believers that it would be wise for them to do so in order to avoid later embarrassment if consents are withheld."

1256. Period of Engagement and Announcement of Engagement

"The Laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas regarding the period of engagement have not been made applicable to believers in the West, and therefore there is no requirement that the parties to a marriage obtain consent of the parents before announcing their engagement. However, there is no objection to informing the believers that it would be wise for them to do so in order to avoid later embarrassment if consents are withheld."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, January 17, 1971: Australian Bahá'í Bulletin, February 1971, No. 198)



Comments

January 17. On this date in 1958, the Brisbane Telegraph carried an article about the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár noting "The Sydney House of Worship will be the third built by the Faith, which has 8 million followers in 3,700 localities in the world."

January 17. On this date in 1958, the *Brisbane Telegraph* carried an article about the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár noting "The Sydney House of Worship will be the third built by the Faith, which has 8 million followers in 3,700 localities in the world."

From *Bahá'í Faith in Australia 1947-1963* by Graham Hassall....

> *A fresh outbreak of persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran in 1955 had halted plans to construct a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (House of Worship) in Tehran, the capital of Iran, leading Shoghi Effendi to decide to build two: in Kampala, Uganda, and Sydney,*

Australia. A seven-acre site was acquired in February 1956. Plans to build the Temple were officially announced at the 1957 convention. Funds were raised within Australia and from the Bahá'ís from around the world, and the nine-sided, domed Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of simple concrete and marble construction was dedicated in September 1961. The building of this Temple, more than any other activity of the Bahá'ís, aroused public curiosity. The Brisbane Telegraph, reported on 17 January 1958 "The Bahá'ís build a church":

> *The followers of a nineteenth century Persian nobleman will build a £150,000 nine-sided House of Worship 22 miles from Sydney within the next 13 months. The House of Worship will be the centre of a hospital, school for orphaned children, and a college for higher education, making the temple a spiritual centre for all forms of culture, education and welfare work.*
>
> *The Sydney House of Worship will be the third built by the Faith, which has 8 million followers in 3,700 localities in the world.*
>
> *Americans were largely responsible for the spread of the Faith, and two brought it to Australia in 1920. It first came to Brisbane in 1923. The followers were given assembly status in 1949 and it was recognised by the state government under the Religious Institutions Act in January this year.*
>
> *A Brisbane follower said there were nearly 500 Bahá'ís in Australia - 22 of them in Brisbane.*

The Lord Major of Sydney held a reception for international dignitaries present for the dedication, and the Daily Telegraph for 18 September reported 100 visitors from 20 countries among a total of 1,800 at the opening. Press coverage at the time was considerable, and resulted in several articles appearing in church newspapers. In addition to domestic press, brief articles about the Bahá'í Faith appeared at during this period in such international news magazines as Time, and the Economist.[25] The persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran which resulted in the building of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Sydney also hastened the migration of Persian Bahá'ís to Australia and New Zealand - although not in the substantial numbers following the later, 1979 Islamic revolution.

25 West Publishing Corporation, Sydney, 1958; third edition with introduction by

> *A.P. Elkin 1970.*

Comments

January 17. On this date in 2003 the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "To the Bahá'ís of the World" providing an update on the progress of first Five Year Plan of the Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era.

Original file: 0306.html (position #75)

January 17. On this date in 2003 the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "To the Bahá'ís of the World" providing an update on the progress of first Five Year Plan of the Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Era, concluding "Let there be no doubt that what we are witnessing is the gathering momentum of that process of the entry of humanity into the Cause by troops, foreshadowed in Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to the King of Persia, eagerly anticipated by the Master, and described by the Guardian as the necessary prelude to mass conversion."

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *17 January 2003*

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

We have followed, with immense gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh, the unfoldment of the Five Year Plan in the two years since our message of 9 January 2001 to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors. It is heartening, indeed, to see the culture of learning that is taking root everywhere, as the Bahá'í world community focuses on advancing the process of entry by troops. At this juncture, when the collective experience of the community has taken so significant a step forward, we think it timely to review with you the insights thus far gained and to clarify issues that have arisen.

During the initial months of the Plan, National Spiritual Assemblies proceeded with relative ease to divide the territories under their jurisdiction into areas consisting of adjacent localities, called clusters, using criteria that were purely geographic and social and did not relate to the strength of local Bahá'í communities. Reports received at the World Centre indicate that there are now close to 17,000 clusters worldwide, excluding those countries where, for one reason or another, the operation of the Faith is restricted. The number of clusters per country varies widely—from India with its 1,580 to Singapore, which necessarily sees itself as one cluster. Some of the groupings are sparsely populated areas with only a few thousand inhabitants, while the boundaries of others encompass several million people. For the most part, large urban centers under the jurisdiction of one Local Spiritual Assembly have been designated single clusters, these in turn being divided into sectors, so as to facilitate planning and implementation.

With the various countries and territories divided into manageable areas, national communities moved quickly ahead to categorize clusters according to the stages of the development of the Faith mentioned in our 9 January message. The exercise afforded a realistic means for viewing the prospects of the community, but the task of refining the criteria needed for valid assessments is proving to be an ongoing challenge to institutions. To assign a cluster to one or another category is not to make a statement about status. Rather, it is a way of evaluating its capacity for growth, in order that an approach compatible with its evolving development can be adopted. Rigid criteria are obviously counterproductive, but a well-defined scheme to carry out evaluation is essential. Two criteria seem especially important: the strength of the human resources raised up by the training institute for the expansion and consolidation of the Faith in the cluster, and the ability of the

institutions to mobilize these resources in the field of service.

Focus in almost every country has now turned to stimulating the movement of its priority clusters from their current stage of growth to the next. What has become strikingly clear is that progress in this respect depends largely on the efficacy of the parallel process aimed at helping an ever-increasing number of friends to move through the main sequence of courses offered by the institute serving the area. The rise in activity around the world testifies to the success of these courses in evoking the spirit of enterprise required to carry out the divers actions that growth in a cluster, at whatever stage, demands.

Particularly heartwarming to observe is a growing sense of initiative and resourcefulness throughout the Bahá'í world, along with courage and audacity. Consecration, zeal, confidence and tenacity—these are among the qualities that are distinguishing the believers in every continent. They are exemplified by, but are certainly not limited to, those who are arising to pioneer on the home front. As we had hoped, goals for the opening of virgin clusters are being readily met by enthusiastic participants of institute programs who, equipped with the knowledge and skills acquired through training courses, set out to establish the Faith in a new area and bring a fledgling community into being.

In most clusters, movement from one stage of growth to the next is being defined in terms of the multiplication of study circles, devotional meetings and children's classes, and the expansion they engender. Devotional meetings begin to flourish as consciousness of the spiritual dimension of human existence is raised among the believers in an area through institute courses. ***Children's classes, too, are a natural outgrowth of the training received early in the study of the main sequence. As both activities are made open to the wider community through a variety of well-conceived and imaginative means, they attract a growing number of seekers, who, more often than not, are eager to attend firesides and join study circles. Many go on subsequently to declare their faith in Bahá'u'lláh and, from the outset, view their role in the community as that of active participants in a dynamic process of growth.*** *Individual and collective exertions in the teaching field intensify correspondingly, further fuelling the process. Established communities are revitalized, and newly formed ones soon gain the privilege of electing their Local Spiritual Assemblies.*

The coherence thus achieved through the establishment of study circles, devotional meetings and children's classes provides the initial impulse for growth in a cluster, an impulse that gathers strength as these core activities multiply in number. Campaigns that help a sizeable group of believers advance far enough in the main sequence of courses to perform the necessary acts of service lend impetus to this multiplication of activity.

It is evident, then, that a systematic approach to training has created a way for Bahá'ís to reach out to the surrounding society, share Bahá'u'lláh's message with friends, family, neighbours and coworkers, and expose them to the richness of His teachings. This outward-looking orientation is one of the finest fruits of the grassroots learning taking place. The pattern of activity that is being established in clusters around the globe constitutes a proven means of accelerating expansion and consolidation. Yet this is only a beginning.

In many parts of the world, bringing large numbers into the ranks of Bahá'u'lláh's followers has traditionally not been a formidable task. It is therefore encouraging to see that, in some of the more developed clusters, carefully designed projects are being added to the existing pattern of growth to reach receptive populations and lift the rate of expansion to a higher level. Such projects accelerate the tempo of teaching, already on the rise through the efforts of individuals. And, where large-scale enrollment is beginning to result, provision is being made to ensure that a certain percentage of the new believers immediately enter the institute program, for, as we have emphasized in several messages, these friends will be called upon to serve the needs of an ever-growing Bahá'í population. They help deepen the generality of the Bahá'ís by visiting them regularly; they teach children, arrange devotional meetings and form study circles, making it possible to sustain expansion.

All of this opens thrilling opportunities for Local Spiritual Assemblies. Theirs is the challenge, in collaboration with the Auxiliary Board members who counsel and assist them, to utilize the energies and talents of the swelling human resources available in their respective areas of jurisdiction both to create a vibrant community life and to begin influencing the society around them. In localities where Spiritual Assemblies do not exist or are not yet functioning at the necessary level, a step-by-step approach to the development of communities and Local Spiritual Assemblies is showing excellent promise.

It is especially gratifying to note the high degree of participation of believers in the

various aspects of the growth process. In cluster after cluster, the number of those shouldering the responsibilities of expansion and consolidation is steadily increasing. Meetings of consultation held at the cluster level serve to raise awareness of possibilities and generate enthusiasm. Here, free from the demands of formal decision-making, participants reflect on experience gained, share insights, explore approaches and acquire a better understanding of how each can contribute to achieving the aim of the Plan. In many cases, such interaction leads to consensus on a set of short-term goals, both individual and collective. Learning in action is becoming the outstanding feature of the emerging mode of operation.

Let there be no doubt that what we are witnessing is the gathering momentum of that process of the entry of humanity into the Cause by troops, foreshadowed in Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to the King of Persia, eagerly anticipated by the Master, and described by the Guardian as the necessary prelude to mass conversion. *In the vanguard of the process are those clusters which, although still relatively few in number, are now ready to launch intensive programs of growth. The scale of expansion that is to mark the next stage of growth in these clusters calls for an intensity of effort yet to be achieved. May the prodigious output of energy devoted to this mighty undertaking be reinforced by the power of Divine assistance.*

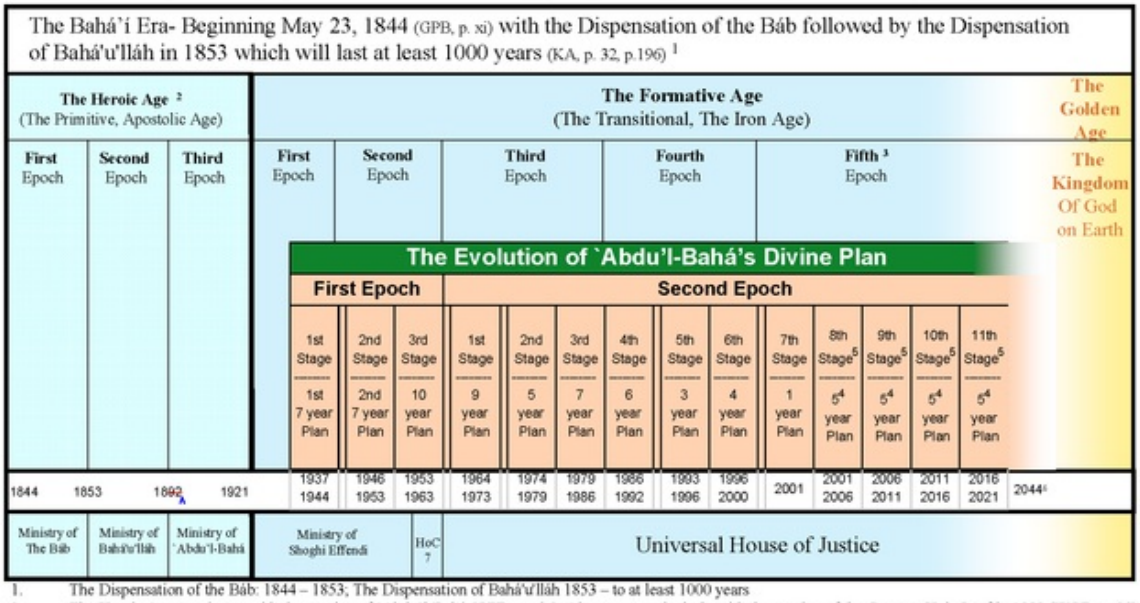
Be assured of our heartfelt prayers in the Holy Shrines that Bahá'u'lláh may bless and confirm your endeavors to realize, to the fullest, the extraordinary opportunities of these precious days.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 18. On this date in 2026, the third Sunday in January, Bahá'ís worldwide celebrate World Religion Day ("a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself") to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting.

January 18. On this date in 2026, the third Sunday in January, Bahá'ís worldwide celebrate World Religion Day ("a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself") to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting.

On January 15, 1950, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States instituted the first celebration of World Religion Day to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting. World Religion Day is observed annually on the third Sunday in January.

On October 22, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual

Assembly of Chicago stated, "Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of **World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself.** Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States, **the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.**"

> *1710. World Religion Day, Purpose of*
>
> *Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of* ***World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself.*** *Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States,* ***the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.*** *In practice, there is no harm in the Bahá'í communities' inviting the persons of other religions to share their platforms on this Day,* ***providing the universality of the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfillment of the hopes of mankind for a universal religion are clearly brought forth.****"*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago, October 22, 1968)*

Comments

January 18. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote Elsa Grossmann, noting "It seems now absolutely certain that our dear Bahá'í sister, Lydia Zamenhof, lost her life in a gas-chamber during the war!"

Original file: 0304.html (position #73)

January 18. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote Elsa Grossmann, noting "It seems now absolutely certain that our dear Bahá'í sister, Lydia Zamenhof, lost her life in a gas-chamber during the war! It is a great loss, as she could have rendered the Faith many services in Europe in these past-war days! But her services to the Cause and her memory are imperishable!"

> *18 January 1947 [to Miss Elsa Grossmann]*
>
> *Your welcome letters ... were received, together with the poems you enclosed in them...*
>
> *He wishes me to assure you he will include some of the poems in the next volume of "Bahá'í World"; it is, unfortunately, too late to get them into the latest number which is now being printed in America.*

It seems now absolutely certain that our dear Bahá'í sister, Lydia Zamenhof, lost her life in a gas-chamber during the war! It is a great loss, as she could have rendered the Faith many services in Europe in these past-war days! But her services to the Cause and her memory are imperishable!

He would be very pleased to receive an article from you about her for the next volume of Bahá'í World, but not for the "In Memoriam" section. Also he regrets he will not be able to publish in the Bahá'í World the In Memoriam article you sent about your dear parents. Only those people who have died in the period covered by each volume receive mention in that volume, and the next one will be for 1946-48!...

P.S. He is very happy to hear dear Mr. Zabih is meeting the friends there; you may be sure he will pray that the way may open for him to help you all in Germany at the present time and serve the Faith in England later on.

The Guardian assures you he is delighted to hear of the translations you have already made and are at present engaged upon; the German literature of the Faith is of the utmost importance, both because of the great future the Cause has there, and the fact that so many other Europeans read German. He hopes "Gleanings" and the "Dispensation" can soon be printed. These matters you should refer to your Nat. Spiritual Assembly.

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

My dear and valued co-worker:

I am so glad and grateful to learn of the activity and perseverance of the dear German believers, and of your own valued and constant services to our beloved Faith. You are, I assure you, often in my thoughts and prayers, and I prize the spirit that animates you in His service. I cherish the brightest hopes for the future of your historic work for the promotion of the Faith, and wish you to persevere and rest assured that the Beloved will continue to guide and sustain you, and will reward you abundantly for your high endeavours.

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

On January 29, 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December 1938, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> *'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.*

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> *Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.*

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> *...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.*
>
> *Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France,*

California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:

> *EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.*

His response was decisive:

> *APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]*

Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:

> *REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.*

She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced fellahin, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.

She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a

> *time of trouble.*

From the following section:

> *Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:*
>
> > *Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]*
>
> *In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.*

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

> *A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof.*

They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:

> *HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]*

She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.

Comments

January 18. On this date in 1953, a letter written by Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, later referenced in a Bahai News article in March 1953, defined the terms "Age" and "Epoch."

January 18. On this date in 1953, a letter written by Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, later referenced in a *Bahai News* article in March 1953, defined the terms "Age" and "Epoch." He had served as a member of the NSA of the US, a member of the International Bahá'í Council, and a Custodian. Among other roles, he had accompanied Shoghi Effendi and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for their May 26, 1952, visit of Israeli President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi.

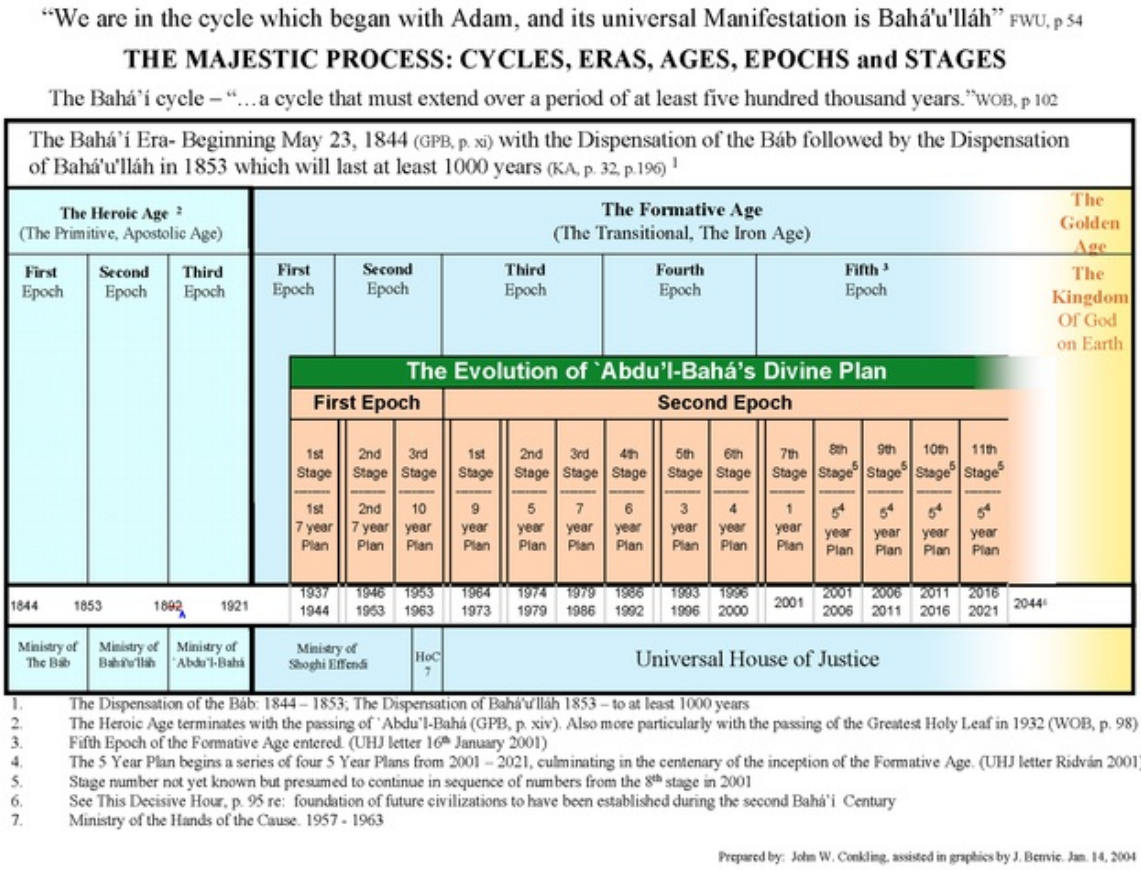
> *LETTER FROM HAIFA*
>
> *DEFINES "AGES"*
>
> *AND "EPOCHS"*
>
> *In a letter dated January 18, 1953,*

written on behalf of the Guardian by Leroy Ioas, Assistant Secretary, the terms "age" and "epoch" as used by the Guardian are defined.

"The Faith is divided into three Ages, the Heroic. the Formative, the Golden Age, as has been outlined in his writings. The Heroic Age closed with the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha. The Formative Age is divided into epochs. The first epoch lasted 25 years. We are now actually in the second epoch of the Formative Age. How long the Formative Age will last is not known - and there will probably be a number of epochs in it.

"The Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Baha is divided into epochs. The first Seven Year Plan constituted the first stage of the first epoch; the second Seven Year Plan constitutes the second stage; while the ten year Crusade

> *will constitute the third stage*
>
> *of the first epoch of the Divine Plan.*
>
> *The first epoch of the Divine Plan*
>
> *will conclude with the conclusion of*
>
> *the ten year Crusade."*
>
> *-NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY*


"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54
THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES
The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years."WOB, p 102
The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2
(The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
The Formative Age
(The Transitional, The Iron Age)
The Golden Age
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage5 54 year Plan
9th Stage5 54 year Plan
10th Stage5 54 year Plan
11th Stage5 54 year Plan
1844
1853
1892 4
1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
2044 6
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice
1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963
Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 18, 2001, the Bahá’í World News Service carried an article titled "Baha'i Chair at Hebrew University hosts conference on modern religions" noting the conference was "co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities and Landegg Academy."

Original file: 0302.html (position #71)

January 18. On this date in 2001, the Bahá’í World News Service carried an article titled Baha'i Chair at Hebrew University hosts conference on modern religions noting the conference was "co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities and Landegg Academy."

Baha'i Chair at Hebrew University hosts conference on modern religions

Baha'i Chair at Hebrew University hosts conference on modern religions

JERUSALEM — Some 54 scholars of religion -- Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Mormon and Baha'i-- gathered in December at the Hebrew University to discuss the impact of modernism on their traditions. The conference, co-sponsored by the Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities and Landegg Academy, has advanced Baha'i studies as an independent field of academic study and enriched the dialogue on the core values common to the monotheistic faiths.

The First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, was held from 17 to 21 December 2000 and focused on common approaches within Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Baha'i Faith toward the philosophical, social and psychological challenges of modernity.

"Religious studies often deal with the origins or history of religions. For example we study the origins of Islam or medieval Judaism," said Yair Zakovitch, Dean of the Hebrew University's Faculty of Humanities. "But the study of religion in modern times is so relevant, so important to the lives of people. It was very significant that these scholars, despite the delicate political situation, were able to gather in Jerusalem to discuss their commonalities and appreciate their differences. People are generally suspicious, and the walls of suspicion collapsed."

The President of the Hebrew University, Menachem Magidor, described to the conference participants his vision of making the Hebrew University into a preeminent center for the study of religion, with research centers devoted to each of the monotheistic faiths. "The Chair in Baha'i Studies is the first link in this chain," he said.

Moshe Sharon, the holder of the Chair in Baha'i Studies and co-convenor of the conference, said that the field of Baha'i studies is emerging as an independent area of academic inquiry and that this was the first conference convened by a major international university for the study of the Baha'i Faith and its relationship to its sister faiths.

"Through this conference," said Dr. Sharon, "the Hebrew University has declared

its interest in Baha'i studies and its recognition of the importance of this field alongside Jewish, Christian and Islamic studies."

The other co-convenor of the conference was Hossain Danesh, the Rector of Landegg Academy, a Baha'i-sponsored institution of higher education in Switzerland.

"The conference focused on fundamental issues that are common to religions, held in a city and at a time when religious conflict in political terms was considerable," Dr. Danesh said.

In his keynote address Dr. Danesh reviewed the common elements of the monotheistic religions that have made them cornerstones of civilizations, as well as some of the teachings and principles of the Baha'i Faith that address challenges unique to the modern age. He presented President Magidor with a volume of fine pen and ink drawings of Baha'i holy places in the Old City of Acre by the Persian architect and draftsman Hushang Seyhoun.

Other presentations and panel discussions were grouped around themes such as "Religion in Modern Times: Philosophical, Social and Psychological Reflections," "Mysticism and Messianism," "Eschatology and Ethics," "Tradition, Renewal and Reform," and "Religion and the Realm of Science." Most of the panelists spoke on aspects of Judaism or the Baha'i Faith, but there were also contributions on Sufism, the Wahhabi movement, modern Islam, and Mormonism.

The participants came mainly from the United States and Israel, but also from Canada, Denmark, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Prof. Degui Cai from China's Shandong University gave a presentation on the fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith and their relevance to Chinese society.

The final panel discussion, on "Contemporary Meeting of Ultimate Differences," featured presentations about African Christians in Israel and about the Baha'i Faith, Christianity and indigenous religions in the Pacific islands. The panel closed with a presentation by Dr. Amnon Netzer of the Hebrew University on "The Jews and the Baha'i Faith." A Jew of Iranian background, Prof. Netzer spoke about the conditions that led as many as ten percent of Iran's Jews to convert to the Baha'i Faith.

"The courteous talk, in which Dr. Netzer showed great respect for those who converted, created an atmosphere of interfaith reconciliation for the audience, which included several Israeli Jews with Baha'i relatives," said Robert Stockman, Coordinator of the Institute for Baha'i Studies in Wilmette, Illinois.

Another significant element of the conference was the participation of many young scholars alongside well-known and outstanding professors and scholars in the field of religious studies.

"The juxtaposition of youth and experience was very insightful and promising for the future of religious studies. It demonstrated that there are fine minds coming up, and this augurs well for the emergence of new insights into the role of religion in the development of civilization," said Dr. Danesh said.

The conference also featured a number of cultural activities. The opening day closed with a program of classical music by the King David String Ensemble, one of the foremost chamber music groups in Israel. Among the selections they performed was a piece well known to Baha'is, "Dastam Bigir Abdu'l-Baha," which the composer had arranged especially for the occasion.

Kiu Haghighi, a Persian Baha'i and master of the santour, closed the conference with a virtuoso performance of an original piece he composed for the event.

On the final day of the conference, 21 December, the participants made a special trip to the Baha'i World Center in Haifa and Acre. They visited the Shrine of the Bab and toured the nearly completed garden terraces stretching above and below the Shrine on the slopes of Mount Carmel. After a luncheon at the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, they visited the Shrine of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i holy places in Acre.

A compilation of articles based on the proceedings of the conference will be published during the coming year, and many of the papers will be made available through the Landegg Academy Web site, www.landegg.org.

The Hebrew University and Landegg Academy have agreed to sponsor annual conferences of this nature, with the venue alternating between Jerusalem and the Landegg campus in Wienacht, Switzerland. The overarching theme of this series of conferences will be "Religion and Science." The next conference is planned for late January 2002 at Landegg.

> *The Chair in Baha'i Studies at the Hebrew University was established in 1999 as the first academic chair in the world devoted to the study of the Baha'i Faith. Other academic centers and programs, most notably the Baha'i Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, have been established to study Baha'i perspectives on and contributions to other academic disciplines.*
>
> *"The systematic study of Baha'i religion, history and literature was introduced into the Hebrew University in the 1990s," wrote Prof. Sharon in the published proceedings of the dedication ceremonies for the Baha'i Chair, held at Mount Scopus and at the Baha'i World Center in Haifa in June 1999.*
>
> *"The magnitude of the material involved, and the vast scope of research which has already been done in the field persuaded the University of the necessity of creating a proper framework for research and teaching designed to accommodate the future development of the field within the academic vision of the University of forming a cluster of research centers dedicated to the study of the major religions of the world."*

The Rector of Landegg International University was Hossain Danesh, who previously served as the Secretary General of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada from 1985 to 1989. In 1994, due to allegations of sexual assault, Hossain Danesh resigned from his post associate professor of psychiatry and family medicine at the University of Ottawa and agreed not to practice medicine in the province of Ontario. As Rector, Hossain Danesh participated in a number for conferences.

For example, in December 2000, Moshe Sharon and Hossain Danesh co-convened the First International Conference on Modern Religions and Religious Movements in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Babi and Baha'i Faiths at Hebrew University. The conference was covered in a Bahá'í World News Service article.

Moshe Sharon was born in Haifa in 1937. He joined the faculty of Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1965 and would go on to earn a Ph.D. at the same institution in 1971. He served as an Arab Affairs adviser to Prime Minister Menachem Begin and served in the Ministry of Defense, during which took part in the negotiations for peace with Egypt. Sharon established the Centre of Jewish Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, which he directed while serving as director of the World Zionist Organization branch in Johannesburg. In 1999 he was appointed to the chair of Bahá'í Studies at Hebrew

University. Sharon serves as a policy expert for the Ariel Center for Policy Research. He and his wife, Judy, have six children.

Moshe Sharon has written about early Islamic history and the development of Shia Islam. He is a specialist in Arabic epigraphy and papyrology, with his opus being *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae*. In 2005 he published the first translation into Hebrew of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and included a study of the history and theology of the religion.

Frequently interviewed by Israeli media, he has been called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar." Among his political views is that there is "no possibility of peace between Israel and the Palestinians whatsoever, for ever" and that peace agreements with Arabs are "pieces of paper, parts of tactics, strategies...with no meaning." Moshe Sharon opposed the Oslo peace accords and believes the dismantling the Israeli settlements, which he terms "expulsions," serve to "increase the appetite of the other side and only achieve the killing of Jews." He blames the Bosnians' being Muslim for the Yugoslav conflict of the 1990's and argues that "The only way to avoid military confrontation with Iran is to leave this military confrontation to powers bigger than Israel."

In the Israeli documentary film "Bahais in My Backyard," during an interview, Moshe Sharon denies the existence of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants in Israel. Despite Sharon's denial of the existence of such relatives, they do exist, and one of Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughters, Nigar Bahai Amsalem, is featured in the film. The denial of these descendants, no less by a purported academic who is "Chair of Bahá'í Studies" at arguably Israel's best university, is curious.

On October 14, 2001, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article titled In Switzerland, Landegg International University passes an important milestone, winning a new level of recognition from the Government.

> *In Switzerland, Landegg International University passes an important milestone, winning a new level of recognition from the Government*
>
> *14 October 2001*
>
> *WIENACHT, Switzerland — Although an African herself, Njeri Mwagiru was turned off by brochures from top universities in the United States and Canada that touted special clubs for Africans, Indians and other major ethnic and racial groups.*

"There just seemed to be a lot of separation on those campuses," said the 20-year-old Kenya native, discussing her decision to come instead to Landegg International University, a Baha'i-inspired institution of higher learning in the foothills of the Swiss Alps. "It seemed to me that things were designed so that people of different cultures could stay apart."

"But here at Landegg, the emphasis is on having people of different cultures get together -- and that is what I was looking for."

Entering her third year in Landegg's Bachelor of Arts program, Ms. Mwagiru is happy with her choice -- a choice made somewhat venturesome by the fact that Landegg's degree programs are only five years old.

But she has indeed found the kind of unity amidst diversity that she was seeking, and Ms. Mwagiru also believes she is receiving a topflight education, one with a distinctive approach.

"It aims to combine various disciplines of study so that they make more sense and the education is more applicable to life," said Ms. Mwagiru, enrolled in a program that brings together the fields of psychology, human development and education.

"And it has delivered everything in terms of the education I expected," she continued. "We have lots of contact with the professors and many in-depth discussions. The school has a general belief in the uniqueness of the individual -- and at the same time the unity of all."

Ms. Mwagiru's description of her experience at Landegg quite accurately matches the university's stated goals, which are to develop and practice a new "integrative" approach to education that combines modern scientific thinking with spiritual and ethical values in a way that meets the needs of an interdependent and global civilization.

"Our curriculum seeks to make sure that the students not only receive the latest academic and scientific information about what they are studying, but that they will also be exposed to the various ethical considerations that pertain to it -- and that they will then learn how to apply it in the real world," said Hossain Danesh, president of Landegg.

On 20 September 2001, Landegg received an important new level of recognition for its approach, when it was formally registered by the cantonal and federal

authorities as a private university in Switzerland. To achieve that, the university had to meet the rigorous criteria set by the government at both the canton and federal levels.

"One of the most significant implications of Landegg's new status is that the Swiss Government has recognized the legitimacy of an approach to education that is global in reach and that has as its basis the idea of applied spirituality within a framework of integrated studies," said Michael Penn, who served as vice rector at Landegg from 1998-2000 and is currently an affiliate professor.

"It is a recognition of the idea that an institution of higher learning can, in an academically rigorous way, apply principles of ethics to the interrogation of social problems in the world," said Dr. Penn, who is professor of psychology at Franklin and Marshall University in Pennsylvania, USA.

Landegg is also winning recognition in other important ways. A high percentage of its graduate students have gone on to prestigious doctoral programs at universities like Stanford and Cambridge. And it has launched a major peace education project in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is winning high praise from government officials.

A Gradual Evolution

Landegg's evolution into a full-fledged university has been a gradual process. Located on some 31 acres on a hillside overlooking Lake Constance in the rustic Swiss village of Wienacht, Landegg International University was previously known as Landegg Academy, and it was used primarily as a conference center.

In that role, Landegg was the venue of a number of significant meetings, including a series of "International Dialogues on the Transition to a Global Society." The first such Dialogue was held in September 1990 and included the participation of Federico Mayor, then UNESCO's Director- General; Karan Singh, a leading Indian author and diplomat; and Bertrand Schneider, then secretary-general of the Club of Rome.

In addition to such high-level gatherings, Landegg was also host to a number of international programs, focusing on peace and world order studies for young people.

Currently comprising some nine buildings, the campus was originally built as a

holiday retreat in the 19th century. The campus was acquired by a Baha'i family in 1982 and the properties were donated to a newly established Landegg International Baha'i Foundation, operating under the aegis of the Baha'i community of Switzerland, which undertook the renovation of its main buildings and established it as a conference center.

In the mid-1990s, the Foundation decided that Landegg's role as a center of learning should become formalized, and Landegg's functions were transferred to an independent board, whose charter states that the university will be operated as an independent university, directed by an international governing board. Among the most important responsibilities of the board is to ensure the academic excellence and independence of the university.

In September 1997, Landegg formally inaugurated a new program of graduate studies, offering a Master of Arts Degree in eight areas, including conflict resolution, psychology, education, and religion. In 1998, Landegg began to offer undergraduate degrees as well and by 2000, the school began seeking formal recognition as a university.

Over the years, Landegg has opened active scholarly exchange programs with a number of universities worldwide, including the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Beijing University in China, the State University of Sergipe in Brazil, and the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, in the USA.

Currently, Landegg offers undergraduate degrees in four areas: economics and international development; political science and international relations; psychology, human development and education; and the integrative study of religion. Students may also design their own area of concentration, with the guidance of the academic office, from among courses offered.

Graduate degrees are offered in six areas: consultation and conflict resolution, moral education, applied ethics, the integrative study of religion, leadership and management, and spiritual psychology. A certificate program in Information Technology has also been launched this year.

The way in which areas of degree concentration combine fields of study across various disciplines gives but a glimpse of how the school seeks to provide an integrative approach.

The cornerstone of that integrative approach, Dr. Danesh explained, is to first

study all of the relevant theories and models that currently exist in a given field. Professors and students themselves are then encouraged to create a new model, based on the new insights into human nature and those universal ethical and spiritual principles that are present in the spiritual and philosophical heritage of humanity, and to see if such a model can have a practical application.

"For example, if we are studying conflict resolution, we first study all of the different theories and models of conflict resolution," said Dr. Danesh. "And we keep them. But we have also developed our own model, which we call 'conflict-free conflict resolution.'" [CFCR]

The new CFCR model, Dr. Danesh said, does not accept that conflict or aggression is necessarily an inevitable feature of human nature. "Rather, our new theory suggests that conflict is a reflection of the different stages in human development and evolution and that it reflects the absence of unity," said Dr. Danesh, whose own work in psychology and spirituality has helped to lay the foundations for the new model.

Dr. Danesh said the theory of conflict-free conflict resolution indicates that the best way to overcome conflict is by seeking higher and higher levels of unity.

Based on the CFCR model, Landegg has developed a subsidiary program, called "Education for Peace," which seeks to help war-torn communities incorporate peace education into the standard public school curriculum. Currently, Education for Peace (EFP) operates a pilot project in six schools in three different communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reaching some 6,000 students.

Global Campus

Although the Landegg campus is relatively small, with a current capacity of approximately 100 full-time, on-campus students, its reach is global. At any given time, only about one third of the school's students are on campus. The rest study from afar, using an array of distance-learning technologies but principally email and the World Wide Web.

The global diversity of the student body is another hallmark of the Landegg experience. For example, the 30- some young people in the undergraduate program come from 20 different countries. The graduate student population of approximately 120 students is as diverse.

"We have students from countries as diverse as Mongolia, Russia, the United States, Venezuela, Canada and China," said Graham Hassall, associate dean of undergraduate studies. "This is one of the wonderful things about Landegg, the global nature of our very small campus."

Nyambura Mwagiru, 21, Njeri's sister, said she also felt one of the best things about Landegg is the global diversity of its student body. "Just being able to sit down and talk with people from so many different places is one of the best things about Landegg," said Nyambura, who, like her sister, is in the psychology, human development and education program. "We learn from each other, and have time to reflect and grow."

Nyambura said she was on her way to King's College in London when she stopped with her sister to visit Landegg. She was so taken with the atmosphere that she stayed, even though it meant giving up on a degree from a school that is much better known around the world.

"It was a big decision but I don't believe I made the wrong decision," said Nyambura. "It is exciting to be part of something that is growing and that is so different."

The faculty of Landegg is similarly global in its diversity. Of its more than 70 professors, many who are affiliated with other colleges and universities around the world, only about 10 are on campus at a given time. Nevertheless, the ability to draw on well-respected academics from more than 20 countries contributes greatly to the internationalism of the educational process at Landegg.

The school has also had a surprising degree of success in placing its graduates. Although only about 30 students have so far received graduate degrees from Landegg, a number have gone on to prestigious graduate programs.

Jenni Menon of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, for example, has been accepted this year into a doctoral studies in psychology and education at Stanford University in the USA; Tania Sargent of Zimbabwe is currently in her second year at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania in the USA; and Mieko Bond went on to do a master's degree in criminology at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

"Landegg was instrumental in helping me get into my current PhD program," said Ms. Menon, who received an MA in Moral Education from Landegg earlier this

year. She cited two key factors in Stanford's acceptance: her experience as one of the coordinators in the pilot phase of the Education for Peace project in Bosnia and, second, the "close, caring and thoughtful attention and advice" she received from her professors at Landegg.

"As a student at Landegg I feel I was simultaneously exposed to a rigorous theoretical and practical service- oriented type of learning," said Ms. Menon. "Of course, many universities promote this theoretical-practical approach to learning, but a unique aspect of Landegg is that this approach occurs through an effort to integrate the scientific and the ethical/moral and spiritual aspects of knowledge and investigation. I think that this unique integrative approach sounded appealing to Stanford, indicating to me that [they] are seeking fresh approaches."

Ms. Sargent likewise feels her experience at Landegg contributed greatly to her acceptance as a PhD candidate at the University of Pennsylvania last year.

"It is quite a hard school to get into," said Ms. Sargent, who finished her course work at Landegg towards an MA in moral education a year ago. "And I think one reason I was accepted was some of the academic writing I had done at Landegg." She wrote a paper entitled "Cultivating the Chinese Intelligence: Costs and Benefits of Chinese Achievement Motivation," which she believes was critical in her U Penn application.

"I was still very surprised when I was accepted and given a good scholarship offer," said Ms. Sargent. "Some people used to ask me, 'Why are you going to such a new school, don't you need to get real credentials?' But getting an MA from Landegg obviously doesn't hinder you from going somewhere else."

Ms. Bond likewise found that some of her friends questioned her decision to go to Landegg to get a master's degree in conflict resolution in 1996. "They would say, 'Will it be recognized by an established university? Will it look good on your CV?,'" said Ms. Bond, who is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Manchester. "But I thought it would be an exciting place to study. And in the end, I did end up at Cambridge. So now my friends have changed their minds."

Comments

January 18. On this date in 2019, the UHJ wrote "Thus do the forces of disintegration regroup and gain ground. So be it. The unification of humanity is unstoppable by any human force; the promises made by the prophets of old and by the Author of the Cause of God Himself testify to this truth."

Original file: 0301.html (position #70)

January 18. On this date in 2019, the Universal House of Justice wrote about World Peace, stating "Thus do the forces of disintegration regroup and gain ground. So be it. The unification of humanity is unstoppable by any human force; the promises made by the prophets of old and by the Author of the Cause of God Himself testify to this truth...Now, with the coming of Bahá'u'lláh, the human race stands on the threshold of its maturity"

The Universal House of Justice

18 January 2019

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

Half a century after Bahá'u'lláh summoned the kings and rulers to be reconciled among themselves and enjoined on them the establishment of peace on earth, the great powers of that era were plunged into war. It was the first conflict to be regarded as a "World War", and it is remembered as a conflagration of horrific severity; the unprecedented scale and ferocity of the bloodshed has seared it on to the consciousness of every succeeding generation. And yet, from out the ruin and suffering, possibilities blossomed for a new order to bring stability to the world—notably at the Paris Peace Conference, which opened a hundred years ago on this day. In the years that followed, despite the repeated crises into which international affairs were thrown, Shoghi Effendi could discern "the progress, however fitful, of the forces working in harmony with the spirit of the age". These forces have continued to move humanity towards an age of peace—not merely a peace which rules out armed conflict, but a collective state of being, manifesting unity. Notwithstanding, it remains a long journey, and it proceeds in fits and starts. We find it propitious, at this moment, to reflect on the progress made on that journey, the contemporary challenges to peace, and the contribution to its attainment that Bahá'ís are called to make.

*There have been at least **three historical moments** in the last one hundred years when it seemed as if the human race was reaching for real, lasting peace, albeit always falling short because of weaknesses it could not overcome. The **first moment**, as a result of the Paris Conference, was the establishment of the League of Nations, an organization intended by its founders to secure peace at the international level. It was the means by which, for the first time in history, the system of collective security enjoined on the world's rulers by Bahá'u'lláh was "seriously envisaged, discussed and tested". But ultimately the peace agreement that concluded the war was fatally flawed, and the League was not able to prevent a second World War, judged by historians to be the deadliest conflict in human history. Just as the first significant step towards world peace followed a period of appalling conflict, so did the **second**, when not only was the United Nations Organization formed from the ashes of the League, but a system of*

international economic institutions came into being, and historic advances were made relating to human rights and international law. In rapid succession, many territories under colonial rule became independent nations, and arrangements for regional cooperation grew markedly in depth and range. The post-war decades, however, were also characterized by an atmosphere of brooding and often open hostility between the world's two major power blocs. Known familiarly as the Cold War, it spilled over into actual wars in various regions of the world, and brought humanity perilously close to a conflict involving nuclear weapons. Its peaceful termination, towards the end of the twentieth century, was an occasion for relief, giving rise to explicit calls for the establishment of a new global order. This was the ***third moment*** *when universal peace seemed to be within grasp. Efforts to put in place new systems for international cooperation and to strengthen existing ones received great impetus, as a series of world conferences on themes of importance to humanity's future were convened by the United Nations. New opportunities for consensus emerged, and the spirit of collaboration propelling progress also found expression in the mandates given to certain international institutions charged with administering justice. This purposeful, deliberative process culminated at the turn of the century in the Millennium Forum, a meeting of representatives of over a thousand civil society organizations from more than a hundred countries, followed by the Millennium Summit, an unparalleled gathering of world leaders which led to agreement on a set of objectives representing a shared ambition of humanity. Styled the Millennium Development Goals, they became rallying points for collective action in the ensuing years. These various advances—despite their many limitations and imperfections and the horrifying conflicts that continued to unfold during this time—stand nonetheless as signs of a widespread, gradual but inexorable rise in global consciousness on the part of the earth's peoples and their attraction to universal justice, to solidarity, to collaboration, to compassion, and to equality.*

As the present century opened, new challenges began to loom. With time, these intensified, leading to a retreat from the promising steps forward with which the previous century had closed. Today, many of the dominant currents in societies everywhere are pushing people apart, not drawing them together. Even as global poverty of the most extreme form has decreased, political and economic systems have enabled the enrichment of small coteries with grossly exorbitant wealth—a condition that fuels fundamental instability in world affairs. The interactions of the individual citizen, governing institutions, and society as a whole are often fraught, as those arguing for the primacy of one or the other show more and more

intransigence in their thinking. Religious fundamentalism is warping the character of communities, even nations. The failings of so many organizations and institutions of society have understandably led to a decline in public trust, but this has been systematically exploited by vested interests seeking to undermine the credibility of all sources of knowledge. Certain shared ethical principles, which seemed to be in the ascendant at the start of this century, are eroded, threatening the prevailing consensus about right and wrong that, in various arenas, had succeeded in holding humanity's basest tendencies in check. And the will to engage in international collective action, which twenty years ago represented a powerful strain of thinking among world leaders, has been cowed, assailed by resurgent forces of racism, nationalism, and factionalism.

Thus do the forces of disintegration regroup and gain ground. So be it. The unification of humanity is unstoppable by any human force; the promises made by the prophets of old and by the Author of the Cause of God Himself testify to this truth. *Yet the course humanity takes to achieve its destiny may very well be tortuous. The tumult raised by the contending peoples of the earth threatens to drown out the voices of those noble-minded souls in every society who call for an end to conflict and struggle. As long as that call goes unheeded, there is no reason to doubt that the world's current state of disorder and confusion will worsen—possibly with catastrophic consequences—until a chastened humanity sees fit to take another significant step, perhaps this time decisive, towards enduring peace.*

*

Universal peace is the destination towards which humanity has been moving throughout the ages under the influence of the Word of God that has been progressively imparted by the Creator to His creation. Shoghi Effendi described humanity's advance towards a new, global stage in its collective life in terms of social evolution, "an evolution that has had its earliest beginnings in the birth of family life, its subsequent development in the achievement of tribal solidarity, leading in turn to the constitution of the city-state, and expanding later into the institution of independent and sovereign nations." ***Now, with the coming of Bahá'u'lláh, the human race stands on the threshold of its maturity.*** *World unity is finally possible. A global order that unifies the nations with the assent of humanity is the only adequate answer to the destabilizing forces that threaten the world.*

However, though world unity is possible—nay, inevitable—it ultimately cannot be achieved without unreserved acceptance of the oneness of humankind, described by the Guardian as "the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve". With what insight and eloquence did he expound upon the far-reaching implications of this cardinal principle! Plainly he saw, amidst the turbulence of world affairs, how the reality that humanity is one people must be the starting point for a new order. The vast array of relations among nations—and within them—all need to be re-envisaged in this light.

The realization of such a vision will require, sooner or later, an historic feat of statesmanship from the leaders of the world. Alas, the will to attempt this feat is still wanting. Humanity is gripped by a crisis of identity, as various peoples and groups struggle to define themselves, their place in the world, and how they should act. Without a vision of shared identity and common purpose, they fall into competing ideologies and power struggles. Seemingly countless permutations of "us" and "them" define group identities ever more narrowly and in contrast to one another. Over time, this splintering into divergent interest groups has weakened the cohesion of society itself. Rival conceptions about the primacy of a particular people are peddled to the exclusion of the truth that humanity is on a common journey in which all are protagonists. Consider how radically different such a fragmented conception of human identity is from the one that follows from a recognition of the oneness of humanity. In this perspective, the diversity that characterizes the human family, far from contradicting its oneness, endows it with richness. Unity, in its Bahá'í expression, contains the essential concept of diversity, distinguishing it from uniformity. It is through love for all people, and by subordinating lesser loyalties to the best interests of humankind, that the unity of the world can be realized and the infinite expressions of human diversity find their highest fulfilment.

Fostering unity, by harmonizing disparate elements and nurturing in every heart a selfless love for humankind, is the task of religion. Great possibilities to cultivate fellowship and concord are open to religious leaders, but these same leaders can also incite violence by using their influence to stoke the fires of fanaticism and prejudice. Writing of religion, Bahá'u'lláh's words are emphatic: "... make it not", He warns, "the cause of dissension and strife." Peace, for "all who dwell on earth", is one of "the principles and ordinances of God".

A heart that has embraced love for the whole of humanity will certainly be pained

when confronted by the suffering that so many endure because of disunity. But the friends of God cannot shut themselves off from the increasing turmoil of the society that surrounds them; they must guard themselves, too, from becoming enmeshed in its conflicts or falling into its adversarial methods. No matter how bleak conditions may appear at any given time, no matter how dismal the immediate prospects for bringing about unity, there is no cause for despair. The distressing state of the world can only spur us to redouble our commitment to constructive action. "These are not days of prosperity and triumph" cautions Bahá'u'lláh. "The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life through the wholesome medicine which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared."

*

The establishment of peace is a duty to which the entire human race is called. The responsibility that Bahá'ís bear to aid that process will evolve over time, but they have never been mere spectators—they lend their share of assistance to the operation of those forces leading humanity towards unity. They are summoned to be as leaven to the world. Consider Bahá'u'lláh's words:

> *Address yourselves to the promotion of the well-being and tranquillity of the children of men. Bend your minds and wills to the education of the peoples and kindreds of the earth, that haply the dissensions that divide it may, through the power of the Most Great Name, be blotted out from its face, and all mankind become the upholders of one Order, and the inhabitants of one City.*

'Abdu'l-Bahá also emphasised the importance of the contribution that Bahá'ís are called on to make to the establishment of world peace:

> *... peace must first be established among individuals, until it leadeth in the end to peace among nations. Wherefore, O ye Bahá'ís, strive ye with all your might to create, through the power of the Word of God, genuine love, spiritual communion and durable bonds among individuals. This is your task.*

"The Promise of World Peace", the message we addressed to the peoples of the world in 1985, set out the Bahá'í perspective on the condition of the world and the prerequisites of universal peace. It also offered the global Bahá'í community as a model for study that could reinforce hope in the possibility of uniting the human race. In the years since, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh have been patiently refining that model and working with others around them to build up and broaden a system of social organization based on His teachings. They are learning how to nurture communities that embody those prerequisites of peace we identified in 1985. They cultivate environments in which children can be raised untainted by any form of racial, national, or religious prejudice. They champion the full equality of women with men in the affairs of the community. Their programmes of education, transformative in their effects and encompassing both the material and spiritual aspects of life, welcome everyone who wishes to contribute to the community's prosperity. In the stirrings of social action can be seen their desire to remedy the numerous ills afflicting humanity and to empower each person to become a protagonist in the building of a new world. Taking inspiration from the concept of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, they invite to their devotional meetings followers of all faiths and none. Youth, distinguished for their commitment to a society founded on peace and justice, are engaging their like-minded peers in the work of building communities on this foundation. In the institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly exists the spiritual authority and the administrative capacity to govern in servitude, to resolve conflicts, and to build unity; the electoral process through which Assemblies are formed is itself an expression of peace, in contrast to the vitriol and even violence that often accompanies elections in the wider society. Implicit in all these dimensions of an open, expanding community is the foundational recognition that all of humanity are the children of one Creator.

The friends are also developing their capacity for engaging those around them, regardless of creed, culture, class, or ethnicity, in conversations about how to bring about spiritual and material well-being through systematic application of the divine teachings. One gratifying result of this growing capacity is the community's increased ability to make meaningful contributions to various important discourses prevalent in society; in certain countries, leaders and thinkers striving to address the challenges confronting their societies increasingly show appreciation for the perspectives offered by Bahá'ís. These contributions articulate insights derived from Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, draw on the experience being generated by the believers around the world, and aim to elevate the discussion

above the acrimony and contention that so often prevent discourses of society from progressing. Further, the ideas and lines of reasoning advanced by Bahá'ís are reinforced by their practice of consultation. Sensitized as they are to the importance of harmony and the fruitlessness of conflict, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh seek to cultivate those conditions that are most conducive to the emergence of unity in any setting. We are heartened to see the believers expanding their efforts to participate in the discourses of society—especially those friends who, in their professional capacity, are able to contribute to discourses directly related to peace.

*

For Bahá'ís, the attainment of peace is not simply an aspiration to which they are sympathetic or a goal complementary to their other aims—it has always been a central concern. In a second Tablet 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to the Central Organization for a Durable Peace in the Hague, He asserted that "our desire for peace is not derived merely from the intellect: It is a matter of religious belief and one of the eternal foundations of the Faith of God." He observed that for peace to be realized in the world, it was not adequate that people should be informed about the horrors of war:

> *Today the benefits of universal peace are recognized amongst the people, and likewise the harmful effects of war are clear and manifest to all. But in this matter, knowledge alone is far from sufficient: A power of implementation is needed to establish it throughout the world.*

"It is our firm belief", He continued, "that the power of implementation in this great endeavour is the penetrating influence of the Word of God and the confirmations of the Holy Spirit."

Certainly, then, none who are conscious of the condition of the world can refrain from giving their utmost to this endeavour and seeking those confirmations—confirmations for which we too earnestly supplicate at the Sacred Threshold on your behalf. Beloved friends: The devoted efforts that you and your like-minded collaborators are making to build communities founded on spiritual principles, to apply those principles for the betterment of your societies, and to offer the insights arising—these are the surest ways you can hasten the fulfilment of the promise of

> *world peace.*
>
> *[signed: The Universal House of Justice]*

Comments

January 18, On this date in 1922, an American Bahá'í wrote Shoghi Effendi "As you know we are having great troubles and sorrows with violators in the Cause in America. This poison has penetrated deeply among the friends."

January 18, On this date in 1922, an American Bahá'í wrote Shoghi Effendi "As you know we are having great troubles and sorrows with violators in the Cause in America. This poison has penetrated deeply among the friends."

From Chapter Two (titled "'Abdu'l-Bahá's Death and Its Consequences) of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, which is an abridged and updated version of *The Priceless Pearl*...

> *It must not be thought, however, that the act of promulgating the Master's Will solved all problems and ushered in a new era in the Cause with the greatest of ease. Far from it. Before Shoghi Effendi reached Haifa the Greatest Holy Leaf had been obliged to cable America on December 14th: "Now is period of great tests.*

The friends should be firm and united in defending the Cause. Nakeseens [Covenant-breakers] starting activities through press other channels all over world. Select committee of wise cool heads to handle press propaganda in America."

> *One of the oldest and most staunch of the American believers wrote to Shoghi Effendi on January 18, 1922, less than two weeks after the public announcement of the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will: "As you know we are having great troubles and sorrows with violators in the Cause in America. This poison has penetrated deeply among the friends..." In many reports, in great detail, accusations and facts poured in upon the newly-made Guardian. There was, of course, another aspect. With touching pure-heartedness and trust the Bahá'ís of East and West rallied round their young leader and poured out avowals of their love and loyalty: "We long to assist the Guardian in every way and our hearts are responsive to the burdens upon his young shoulders..."; "Word has reached us here in Washington that our beloved Master has placed the guidance and protection of the Holy Cause in your hands and that He named you as the head of the House of Justice. I write you these few lines responding with all my heart to the sacred instructions of our Beloved Lord and assuring all the support and fidelity of which I am capable..."; "Beloved of our beloved," he was addressed by two pillars of the Faith in America, "how our hearts sang with joy at the news that the Master had not left us comfortless but had made you, His beloved, the centre of the unity of His Cause, so that the hearts of all the friends may find peace and certainty."*

Comments

January 18. On this date in 1968, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "As a general rule the friends should not seek out contacts among Orientals (i.e., those of Muslim background from the Middle East, Pakistan and India), whether students or not."

Original file: 0299.html (position #68)

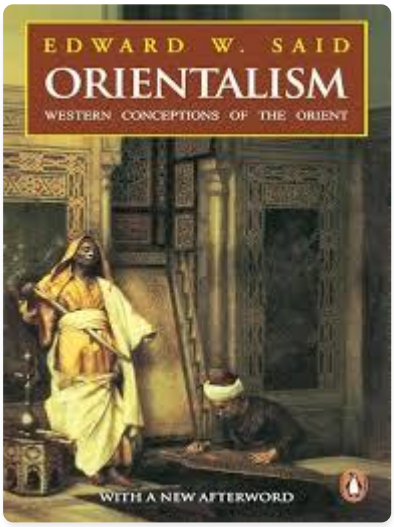
January 18. On this date in 1968, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "As a general rule the friends should not seek out contacts among Orientals (i.e., those of Muslim background from the Middle East, Pakistan and India), whether students or not."

> *1407. Avoid Making Any Effort to Convert Orientals to the Faith--i.e., Muslims from the Middle East, Pakistan and India*
>
> *"As a general rule the friends should not seek out contacts among Orientals (i.e., those of Muslim background from the Middle East, Pakistan and India), whether*

students or not. However, when contact with Orientals occurs in the course of normal social events the friends, as in all other cases, should show courtesy and kindness, but in these days when the political situation is so confused the friends should consciously avoid making any effort to convert Orientals to the Faith.

"Should such individuals, however, show real interest in the Faith even to the point of wishing to declare, your National Assembly should be contacted by either the Local Spiritual Assembly or the individual teacher so that you in turn can contact the National Spiritual Assembly of the country of origin of the applicant, giving that Assembly full particulars and requesting it to inform you whether there is any objection to the enrolment of that particular individual. Nevertheless, if it appears that the Oriental wishing to declare is contemplating a return to his own country soon, you should follow your present practice of requesting that he declare to the proper administrative institution of his own country."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 18, 1968)



Comments

January 19. On this date in 1880, Ruth Moffett was born. She would become one of the outstanding traveling speakers for the religion who is known to have aided the founding of Bahá'í communities.

Original file: 0298.html (position #67)

January 19. On this date in 1880, Ruth Moffett was born. She would become one of the outstanding traveling speakers for the religion who is known to have aided the founding of Bahá'í communities.

On May 18, 1954, Ruhaniyyih Ruth Moffett arrived in Israel. She described the founding of that country six years previous as "a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world youngest democracy -- nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow. Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!"

> *At 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18, the Royal Sabena glided along the runway to*

the first stop in Brussels, Belgium, after the long transoceanic flight. There the same plane was reconditioned and flew over Europe, and Brindisi, the tip of the heel of Italy, over the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas, and arrived in Athens, where the plane was again reconditioned, and arrived at 10:30 p.m., May 18, 1954 at the airport at Jappa, Tel Aviv, Israel. This is the modern miracle, to travel thousands of miles from Chicago to Tel Aviv in only thirty nine hours!

As the Royal Sabena plane winged its way toward Israel, Ruhaniyyih wondered how it would look in comparison with when she saw it before - a desert land filled with rocks, sand, thorny bushes and confusion, and where everyone seemed to be against his neighbor. As the approaching lights of the Holy Land again came into view, her heart was filled with joyful and reverential expectancy and she thought to the words of the song, "Israel - The Land of Promise Welcomes You".

As she gazed meditatively at the approaching lights of the Holy Land, the panorama of history seemed to unroll before her mind: of how Palestine was peopled by cave dwellers in about 3500 B.C.; of how Abraham was led to this land, and God made a covenant with Him, "that in the seed of Abraham shall all the nations of the earth be blest"; of the Cananites, and later how Moses led the Israelites out of bondage, and for forty years in the wilderness, and Joshua led them to the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey; how the Jewish people built up the land but turned away from God to gods of their own making. Then Saul became the first king and established a civic kingdom, but he died. David became the king unifying the kingdom and calling them to return to God: and David died and was called to his fathers. Solomon, his son became King. He expanded the kingdom, and to this day, the glory and unity of his kingdom is still sung. But Solomon died and the tribes became divided. Then the Assyrians in 1722 B.C., destroyed Damascus and Israel and took the tribes into captivity, and they became scattered. After the Babylonian invasion in 586 B.C. the remaining tribes of Judah were taken into Babylonia and scattered. Alexander the Great captured Palestine in 332 B.C. The coming of Jusus, the Christ, had a profound effect on the history of this land, which became a noted center of pilgrimages.

Under the Moslem dominion from 636 A.D. for four centuries, and the long period of the Christian Crusades, one lasting 100 years, there was much destruction and a little progress. *It was under the control of the Ottoman Turks from 1516 until the first World War, then it cecame a mandate of Great Britain, under the League of Nations. "The White Paper" gave the promise*

> *that the doors of Palestine would again open to her people. Many outbreaks of violence have occurred between the Jews and Arabs, which have caused this land to become on of the danger spots of the world. After World War II, the Jews began returning in large numbers, until today there are about 1,465,000 Jews, gathered from 75 countries, 125,000 Moslems, 40,000 Christians, and 16,000 Druzes in Israel.*
>
> ***On May 14, 1948, a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world youngest democracy -- nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow. Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!***

Ruth J. Moffett was born on January 19, 1880 and met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on a train platform in Chicago in 1912. After attending one of his lectures, she became a Bahá'í and became active in service in 1919. Her teaching efforts took her throughout the Americas, Europe, Egypt and the Near East. The Greatest Holy Leaf (Bahiyyih Khanum) named her Ruhaniyyih, conoting spirituality, joy and beauty. Ruth J. Moffett died on July 5, 1978.

Comments

January 19. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...according to the explicit text of the Aqdas, capital punishment is permitted, but also an alternative has been definitely provided whereby the rigours of such a condemnation can be seriously mitigated. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a choice ..."

Original file: 0297.html (position #66)

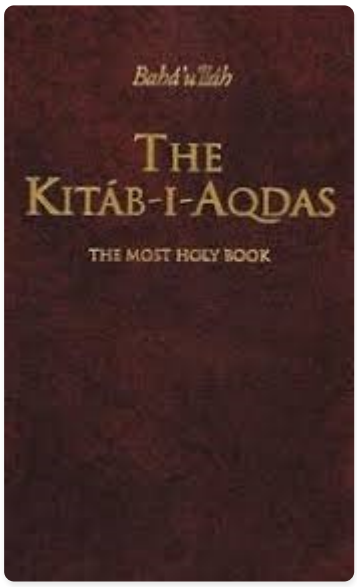
January 19. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...according to the explicit text of the Aqdas, capital punishment is permitted, but also an alternative has been definitely provided whereby the rigours of such a condemnation can be seriously mitigated. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a choice, and has, therefore, left us free to use our own discretion within certain limitations imposed by His law."

In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the central book of the Bahá'í

Faith written by Bahá'u'lláh, was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations, such as one by the Royal Asiatic Society, were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet. My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.

> *...according to the explicit text of the Aqdas, capital punishment is permitted, but also an alternative has been definitely provided whereby the rigours of such a condemnation can be seriously mitigated. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a choice, and has, therefore, left us free to use our own discretion within certain limitations imposed by His law. [Footnote: The alternative is life imprisonment.]*
>
> *(From a letter dated 19 January 1935 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)*



Comments

January 19. On this date in 2007, an article titled "Lots of Parties, a War, Some Bad Press and an Astounding Garden Terrace" appeared in Haaretz featuring the retirement of Bahá′í International Community deputy secretary-general Murray Smith.

Original file: 0296.html (position #65)

January 19. On this date in 2007, an article titled "Lots of Parties, a War, Some Bad Press and an Astounding Garden Terrace" appeared in *Haaretz* featuring the retirement of Bahá′í International Community deputy secretary-general Murray Smith.

> *Lots of Parties, a War, Some Bad Press and an Astounding Garden Terrace*
>
> *My 12 years in Israel were the most fascinating time of my life, says departing Bahai official [Murray Smith](Murray Smith.*
>
> *Charlotte Hallé*
>
> *Jan 19, 2007 12:00 AM*

Even Murray Smith seems a little taken aback when he calculates how many cocktail parties and diplomatic events he must have attended since taking up the post of deputy secretary general of the Bahai World Center in Haifa twelve and a half years ago. Calculating an average of two events each week, the number easily tops the thousand mark.

"It makes me sound like a bit of playboy," admits the 65-year-old former politician. "But it's actually hard work."

Not convinced? Smith, whose lengthy term of voluntary service in Israel ends this month, arrives at his office at the Bahai World Center by 7:30 five or six mornings a week. He days included hosting VIP guests at the center, meeting with Israeli officials and briefing diplomats in his role on the secretariat of the Bahai international community, which he describes as its "foreign ministry." By the end of the evening receptions - usually in Tel Aviv, Herzliya Pituah or Jerusalem - when Smith must drive back to Haifa, he is understandably on the tired side.

"After a period, you recognize what your limits are," says Smith, who served as a Labor member of parliament in his native New Zealand some 30 years ago. "My wife and I used to entertain at home in the early years, but we realized we couldn't keep up the pace. She has a hec tic and demanding job herself."

Miette Smith, who joined her husband in Israel for what was billed as an "indefinite period," volunteers as a librarian at the Bahai World Center, the international headquarters for the faith's five million believers worldwide. She was the first in the family to accept the Bahai religion, after encountering the faith while campaigning for her husband. After a period of intensive study, she ceased actively campaigning as the faith strictly forbids affiliation with a political party. Such partisan political activity is considered the antithesis of unity, one of the supreme Bahai values (see box below).

The Smiths' five children studied the Bahai teachings and made the commitment to become followers of the religion. Their father was actually the last family member to convert in 1989, thus bringing to a close his many years of involvement with New Zealand's Labor Party.

Not that his job in Israel can be described as free of politics. While the secretariat works to address issues facing Bahais around the world - most notably in Iran, where the 350,000 members are persecuted and regarded as heretics and Zionist

collaborators - its staff must also contend with local matters here.

And the last 12 years have certainly been eventful ones for the several hundred tourists and temporary residents who make up the Haifa Bahai community. Most visibly, the center's spectacular garden terraces on Mount Carmel were opened to the public in May 2001, after a $250 million investment by the community. The move significantly raised the profile of the community - which adheres to a strict policy of not seeking converts in Israel - bringing them under greater scrutiny and, according to Smith, some unfounded criticism.

In 2001, the center was reported to have received millions of shekels in irregular payments from the Israeli government. Subsequently, it was claimed the center had received tax reimbursements it was not entitled to, had unethical links to the Labor Party and used excessive amounts of water to maintain the gardens. Bahais were even accused of worshiping idols and using incense during religious practices. Bahai officials strongly denied all these accusations; none proved to be true.

"Having been in politics, adverse publicity is nothing new and is to be expected," says Smith, resolutely. "The media is always looking for angles. We just hope that most of what is written about us is better researched or that they come to us first [to check facts or for a response]. We don't have anything to hide."

One highlight of his stay was the 1998 Bahai national convention, which drew believers from more than 75 countries. "To see everyone participating in a system of governance free of partisan politics was really something," says Smith.

But the next convention, in 2003, was canceled due to the SARS epidemic, complicated by the impending invasion of Iraq which threatened consequences in Israel. Smith reports that voting for the nine-person body that functions as the faith's supreme governing authority still took place by postal ballot. "But the excitement and the motivation that come from being part of a convention and seeing it operate was lost," he admits.

Business as usual

Last summer's war caught the community as much by surprise as everyone else in Haifa. "We encouraged our staff to continue with business as usual," says Smith, who reflects on the period as "an interesting leadership experience," which challenged him in a way he had "never been tested before." Though the gardens were closed for the duration, at the request of Mayor Yona Yahav, the Haifa

landmark remained fully lit the whole night rather than just the usual two hours after sunset as a "gesture of confidence and optimism."

He says the "feedback was good. Local people felt it did have a positive effect."

Smith's many contacts in Israel had a chance to bid him farewell at a reception on Wednesday in Herzliya Pituah, where they also met his successor, Anthony Vance, an American who worked for USAID for 21 years, the last six in Cairo.

Not surprisingly, the main factor calling the Smiths back to New Zealand is family - most of their children and grandchildren live there. Ahead of the posting in Israel, the couple purchased a retirement home in the West Coast village of Raglan, renowned in the surfing world for having the planet's longest left-hand break. With a permanent population of just 3,000, Smith admits the pace of life is going to take some getting used to.

"Leaving here is going to be a real wrench. It's been the most fascinating and interesting time of my life," he says, before pointing to one area that will offer some compensation: "I'm going to watch a lot of rugby and cricket."

Comments

January 19. On this date in 1908, Helen Mirrell Goodall and her daughter Ella Goodall Cooper "left the Holy Land, our spiritual Home, to enter the world again." They would later write a book about this visit, titled "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908."

Original file: 0295.html (position #64)

January 19. On this date in 1908, Helen Mirrell Goodall and her daughter Ella Goodall Cooper "left the Holy Land, our spiritual Home, to enter the world again." They would later write a book about this visit, titled *Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908*" which among other things chronicles Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali's description of Bahá'u'lláh's exile accompanied with "Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen" after "the Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf." The book also recounts "The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy Bab and Bahá'u'lláh was accorded us just before we left Akka. This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty is the only one in existence. How perfectly that noble Face and Form

embody the Words, 'The King has come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler of the Throne and of the dust!' and at the same time express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and Love."

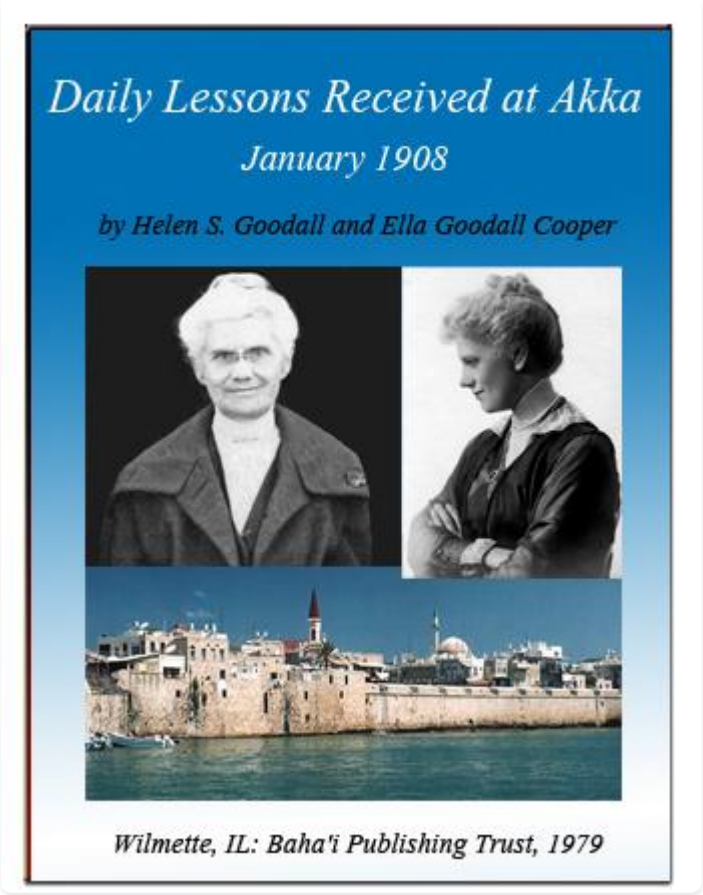
> *On the nineteenth of January we left the Holy Land, our spiritual Home, to enter the world again. Our hearts were full to overflowing with the gracious gifts which had been bestowed--not only upon us, but upon all the friends to whom we were bearing Abdu'l-Bahá's loving messages.*

The book contains many observations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's household, daily routine and other visitors. The ladies also chronicle some the lessons they received, such as this recounting of the *Exile of Bahá'u'lláh* by Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali, who is the author of *Bahá'í Martyrdoms in Persia in the Year 1903 AD* and *Bahjat-i sudur* [Bombay: Parsi Press, 1913]; English translation by Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, *Stories from the Delight of Hearts* (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1980).]

> ***When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf,*** *saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.*
>
> *Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.*
>
> *The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to* ***exile Him to Baghdad?****" This was accordingly done, and an* ***escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen*** *to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.*

The book also describes in the chapter titled *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH* their impressions on viewing the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh

> *THE PICTURE OF BAHA'U'LLAH*
>
> *The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy Bab and Bahá'u'lláh was accorded us just before we left Akka.*
>
> *This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty is the only one in existence. How perfectly that noble Face and Form embody the Words, "The King has come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler of the Throne and of the dust!" and at the same time express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and Love.*


Daily Lessons Received at Akka
January 1908
by Helen S. Goodall and Ella Goodall Cooper
Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1979

Comments

January 19. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote, "Concerning the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of the world government, the House of Justice fully agrees with your view that the Bahá'ís must now do all in their power to promote this transition."

January 19. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote, "Concerning the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of the world government, the House of Justice fully agrees with your view that the Bahá'ís must now do all in their power to promote this transition."

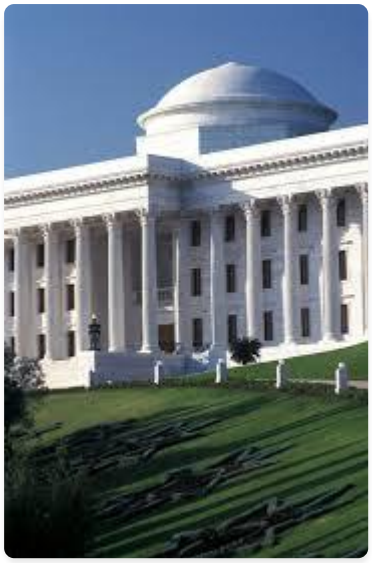
> *1428. The Transition from the Present System of National Sovereignty to a*

System of World Government

"Concerning the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of the world government, the House of Justice fully agrees with your view that the Bahá'ís must now do all in their power to promote this transition. This requires several related activities, all of which are goals of the present Seven Year Plan. One is the establishment as rapidly as possible of firmly grounded efficiently functioning Local Spiritual Assemblies in every part of the world, so that seekers everywhere will have a point of reference to which they can turn for guidance and for the Teachings of the Faith. A second is the deepening of the believers, of all ages, in their understanding of and obedience to the Teachings. A third is the proclamation of the Faith to all strata of society, and in particular to those in authority and to leaders of thought so that those who hold the direction of peoples in their hands will learn accurately about the nature and tenets of the Faith and will grow to respect it and implement its principles. A fourth is the promotion of Bahá'í scholarship, so that an increasing number of believers will be able to analyse the problems of mankind in every field and to show how the Teachings solve them. A fifth is the development of relations between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations both directly with the highest U.N. institutions and at a grass-roots level in areas of rural development, education, etc.

"As you are no doubt aware, the Guardian indicated that the development of mankind from its present chaotic condition to the stage of the Bahá'í World Commonwealth would be a long and gradual one. The coming into existence of a World Authority and the initiation of the Lesser Peace is one major transformation in this process, and will be followed by other stages of the development of the Faith as outlined by Shoghi Effendi in his writings. Undoubtedly, as these developments are taking place, the counsel the institutions of the Faith can give to governments, the pattern of world administration offered by the Bahá'í community and the great humanitarian projects which will be launched under the aegis of the Universal House of Justice will exercise a great influence on the course of progress."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, January 19, 1983: Ibid.)



Comments

January 19. On this date in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (née Mary Sutherland Maxwell) died in Haifa, at the home, originally a residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where she had resided since 1937 when she married Shoghi Effendi. She was buried adjacent to the home.

Original file: 0293.html (position #62)

January 19. On this date in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (née Mary Sutherland Maxwell) died in Haifa, at the home, originally a residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where she had resided since 1937 when she married Shoghi Effendi. She was buried adjacent to the home.

Mary Sutherland Maxwell was born on August 8, 1910, to William Sutherland Maxwell (the architect who would design the Shrine of the Bab and be named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Ellis Bolles Maxwell. Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

> *Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.*

It was at this home that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his talk discussing his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America:

> *Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.*
>
> *If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect.* ***The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without***

education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the

fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. ***Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.***

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The

world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge

> *more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.*

During her youth she twice traveled to Palestine for pilgrimage, the first time with her mother at age twelve and the second time with her mother's friends at age sixteen. It was during these pilgrimages that she first met Shoghi Effendi.

As a young woman, Mary had expressed a great desire to learn Spanish. However, her plans to travel to Republican Spain were thwarted with the Spanish Civil War. Instead, Mary chose to live with her cousin in Nazi Germany in 1935, a move which was endorsed by Shoghi Effendi. In Germany, Shoghi Effendi encouraged Mary to strengthen the fledgling Bahá'í community. The young Mary assimilated herself in German culture, wearing a dirndl and learning to speak German fluently. Whilst in Germany, Mary received an invitation from Shoghi Effendi to make a pilgrimage with her mother. Mother and daughter accepted the invitation.

Arriving in Haifa in January 1937 with her mother, she and Shoghi Effendi began a brief courtship. In February the couple were engaged, and Mary cabled her father to come as soon as he could to Haifa. On March 24 at the age of 26, Mary married Shoghi Effendi. The newlyweds made a trip to Switzerland and Shoghi Effendi introduced his young bride to his favorite sights in the country to which he would often travel. It was only a year after his wedding that Shoghi Effendi in 1938 praised Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria.

In 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed her to the International Bahá'í Council and in 1952 a Hand of the Cause of God, as a replacement for her father who had died shortly before her appointment. She accompanied Shoghi Effendi during his various visits with the leadership of the newly-established State of Israel.

After Shoghi Effendi's death, for the remainder of her life, she traveled extensively and gave numerous talks. From 1969 through 1973, she undertook a Great African Safari. Around 1981, she spoke to the Persian Bahá'í community in Los Angeles "upbraiding them for settling in a such a decadent urban center, implying they should never have left Iran, and that if they had insisted on doing so should at least have had the decency to settle as

missionaries in some remote village of the global South...When someone from the audience asked where they should have settled instead, she replied in Persian that it was self-evident: *"Khar kih nistid"* ("you are not asses")."

She died on January 19, 2000, at the age of 89 in Haifa, Israel where she is buried at the Bahá'í World Centre.

Comments

January 20. On this date in 1922, Roy Fernie was born in the Panama Canal Zone. The only son of Evelyn Granthame-Hayes and Cyril Fernie, the owner of the C. Fernie Steamship Company, he would later be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Gilbert and Ellis Islands.

Original file: 0292.html (position #61)

January 20. On this date in 1922, Roy Fernie was born in the Panama Canal Zone. The only son of Evelyn Granthame-Hayes and Cyril Fernie, the owner of the C. Fernie Steamship Company, he would later be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Gilbert and Ellis Islands.

Roy Fernie was the only son of Evelyn Granthame-Hayes and Cyril Fernie, the owner of the C. Fernie Steamship Company in the

Panama Canal Zone. He was born on January 20, 1922 at Ancon in the Canal Zone, but spent most of his school years in England with his grandparents.

Since Roy was the only son, his father definitely expected him to make major in businesses administration and take over the reins of the Steamship Company. Accordingly, he sent him to business college in England. But Roy, from childhood on, manifested a tremendous variety of talents, none of them in the least related to the business world. he had an excellent ear for harmony and learned to play both the accordion and piano by ear. He painted, wrote science fiction stories, directed stage plays, and was a superb actor. His abilities were so diverse they seemed to include almost everything but business. But his greatest ambition, he often said, was always to be a doctor.

When World War I broke out Roy was only too glad to escape what he considered to be the dull routine of business school and he joined the Royal Air Force. Because of illness he was discharged from the Air Force, but then emigrated to the United States an again entered the Armed Services. When the war ended he became an American citizen and lived for several years in St. Louis, Missouri.

By that time Roy's father had retired from active participation in the Steamship Agency, but he constantly kept hope that Roy would take over the business, and eventually, to please his father, Roy returned to the Canal Zone. It was there that he first heard of the Bahá'í Faith. He was recuperating from a severe tropical fever at his sister's home in Panama City when he heard her mention a Bahá'í girl she had just met. It was late in the evening, and to his sister's consternation he insisted he must meet the "Bahá'í girl" immediately. He was so dogged in his determination that she called the girl and practically begged her to let Roy come over.

That same night Roy found himself in the headquarters of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central America and the Antilles. The "Bahá'í girl" was Elena Maria Marsella, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly. Roy's family background was Anglican, but he himself had long since ceased to adhere to any "organized religion". With his naturally inquisitive mind he had investigated many faiths but had never found one that seemed sensible or, in his words, "logical".

From that point onward Roy's life took a very different turn. He made his declaration in March of 1953; two months later he and Elena were married, and in another three months the newlyweds had answered the call of the Ten Year Crusade.

For Roy's father this was the last straw. He disinherited his son. This was a great shock to Roy who attached little importance to wealth, because he genuinely wished his father to understand what he called a "new job that was worth more then a million dollars".

After many interesting adventures the Fernies found themselves on Abaiang in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.

From the first the Gilbertese were fascinated with this tall, lanky American with the brilliant blue eyes, the bubbling personality, the unfailing sense of humor. He kept them constantly intrigued. He put on magic shows for them, played the piano, sand with them, learned their language and started English classes for them. Although he could not openly teach the Faith he actually taught all the principles by example. And before long he had a myriad opportunities to teach that way, for the missionaries began to suspect that the Fernies were not just visiting the Gilbert Islands to study the Flora and fauna. Soon they were hinting that the Fernies were a "dangerous" couple who were under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Scotland Yard. The Colonial Government, without giving Roy and opportunity to defend himself, accepted the accusations as true.

Day by day the persecution grew more intense, but it served only to draw the people themselves closer and closer to the Fernies. When finally a Catholic priest saw the word "Bahá'í" on a letter addressed to the "dangerous Americans" he proclaimed the Faith for them. He obtained information about it from Australia, then wrote articles in *The Star of the Gilberts* magazine which went to every island in the atoll. Meanwhile, one Gilbertese had actually declared his acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. Peter became Roy's constant companion. He could read English and he eagerly devoured every book in the Fernie library. Shoghi Effendi, in a letter to him, told him not to teach his people yet, but to follow the example of the Fernies.

With the proclamation of the Faith by the Catholic priest, Roy and Peter the first Gilbertese Bahá'í, were constantly harassed, both by the missionaries and the heads of the Colonial Government.

But time was short for Roy. First Peter was deported to his own island in the Southern Gilberts, accused of crimes. Then Roy was accused of being a divisive influence, and he was deported to Canton Island.

He went to Hawaii to be as near as possible to the Gilberts, hoping that as a result of the Colonial Government's investigation in London and the efforts of the British National Spiritual Assembly, he would be allowed to return. He died on October 21, 1964, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook

Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

January 20. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "For the history of the Cause, particularly in Persia, is a clear illustration of the truth that such persecutions invariably serve to strengthen the believers in their faith, by stimulating the spiritual powers latent in their hearts..."

Original file: 0291.html (position #60)

January 20. On this date in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "For the history of the Cause, particularly in Persia, is a clear illustration of the truth that such persecutions invariably serve to strengthen the believers in their faith, by stimulating the spiritual powers latent in their hearts..."

> *For the history of the Cause, particularly in Persia, is a clear illustration of the truth that such persecutions invariably serve to strengthen the believers in their faith, by stimulating the spiritual powers latent in their hearts, and by awakening in them a new and deeper consciousness of their duties and responsibilities*

> *towards the Faith. Indeed, the mere progress of the Cause, by provoking the hatreds and jealousies of peoples and nations, creates for itself such difficulties and obstacles as only its divine spirit can overcome. `Abdu'l-Bahá has emphatically stated that the enmity and opposition of the world will increase in direct proportion to the extension and progress of the Faith. The greater the zeal of the believers and the more striking the effect of their achievements, the fiercer will be the opposition of the enemy.*
>
> *(In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 20 January 1935 to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma)*

Comments

January 20. On this date in 1922, American Bahá'í's cabled Shoghi Effendi "American rejoices appointment offers you its devoted services co-operation." His wife notes "After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa."

Original file: 0290.html (position #59)

January 20. On this date in 1922, American Bahá'í's cabled Shoghi Effendi "American rejoices appointment offers you its devoted services co-operation." Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum notes in her book *The Priceless Pearl*, "After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa."

From Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*...

A mutually trusting and tender relationship grew up between the young Guardian and those he called "the children of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" from the very first moment they heard he had been named the Master's successor. When the provisions of His Will were promulgated, after its official reading on 7 January 1922, the national body, still known as the "Bahá'í Temple Unity" or "Executive Board", cabled him on 20 January "American rejoices appointment offers you its devoted services co-operation." They were both young, the Guardian and the American Community, and there is something about the way they grew up together, in his ministry, that is deeply moving. After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa, "The onward march of the Cause hath not been, nor can it ever be stayed. I pray the Almighty that my efforts, now refreshed and reassured, may with your undiminished support lead it to glorious victory." The National Assembly replied on the 19th "Your Message refreshed and revivified every heart like unto the refunctioning of the body of oneness may the power of a sustained unity in America be your ever present help our love loyalty devoted co-operation and happiness to you."

Comments

January 20. On this date in 1882, Bahá'u'lláh wrote the "Tablet of Maqṣúd". On May 1, 2001, the Universal House of Justice replied "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia."

Original file: 0289.html (position #58)

January 20. On this date in 1882, Bahá'u'lláh wrote the *Tablet of Maqṣúd*.

The translation of this work into English is in a style reminiscent of the King James Bible, perhaps to give the work an air of religiosity that a native English speaker would be familiar with. Consider the opening lines...

> *He is God, exalted is He, the Lord of Majesty and Power*
>
> *A PRAISE which is exalted above every mention or description beseemeth the Adored One, the Possessor of all things visible and invisible, Who hath enabled the Primal Point to reveal countless Books and Epistles and Who, through the potency of His sublime Word, hath called into being the entire creation, whether of the former or more recent generations.*

On February 7, 2001, an individual asked the Universal House of Justice the "Two great powers" referred to in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd. On May 1, 2001, the Universal House of Justice replied "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia."

Lawh-i-Maqsúd: Letter from the Universal House of Justice; excerpt from Juan Cole's Modernity and Millennium

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice From: Research Department

Date: 1 May 2001

Lawh-i-Maqsúd1

The Research Department has studied the questions about the Lawh-i-Maqsúd raised by Mr. ... in his email message of 7 February 2001 to the Universal House of Justice. Specifically, he enquires about the date of the revelation of the Tablet of Maqsúd and he seeks information about the "Two great powers"2 referred to in this Tablet. We provide the following response.

Date of Revelation of the Tablet

The Lawh-i-Maqsúd was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the prison-city of 'Akká on the 29th of Safar 1299 A.H. (January 20 1882).

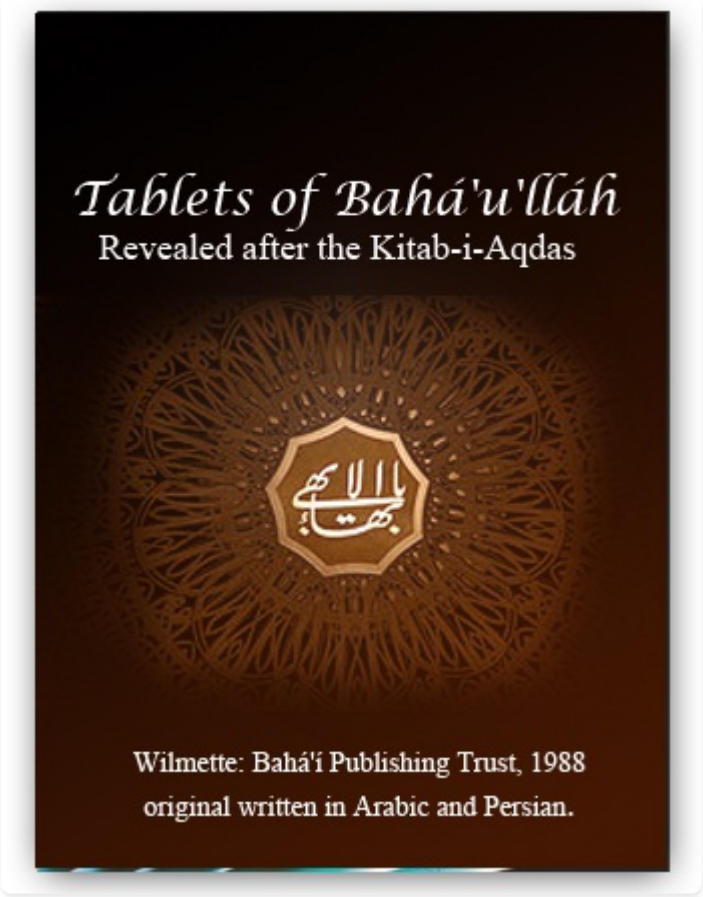
"Two great powers"

Mr. ... requests information about the "Two great powers", mentioned in the following passage from the Tablet of Maqsúd, that appears on page 170 of Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Two great powers who regard themselves as the founders and leaders of civilization and the framers of constitutions have risen up against the followers of the Faith associated with Him who conversed with God.3 The Research Department has not, to date, been able to locate any references in the Bahá'í Writings that explain the identity of the two countries that arose against the followers of Moses. However, from a perusal of European history in the second part of the 19th century, it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia. The world powers of the 1880s were Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. The Encyclopedia Judaica indicates that the Jews were officially emancipated in Germany during the latter half of the 19th century, and although there was some anti-semitic activity in Austria, it was officially opposed by the government. In France, however, between 1881 and 1894, there was a rise of anti-Jewish publicity and agitation, the founding of the National Anti-Semitic League in 1889, and the demand in 1891 by 32 French deputies (members of parliament) that Jews be expelled from France, culminated in the infamous Dreyfus Affair of 1894. In Russia, the assassination of Alexander II led to pogroms, leading to the so-called "May laws" of 1882 which prohibited Jews from living in villages and in 1886 to the limitation of the number of Jews allowed into University. Discrimination was continued officially until 1918. There was no official anti-semitism in Britain.

Notes: 1 Published in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1997), pages 159-178. 2 Ibid., page 170. 3 Moses

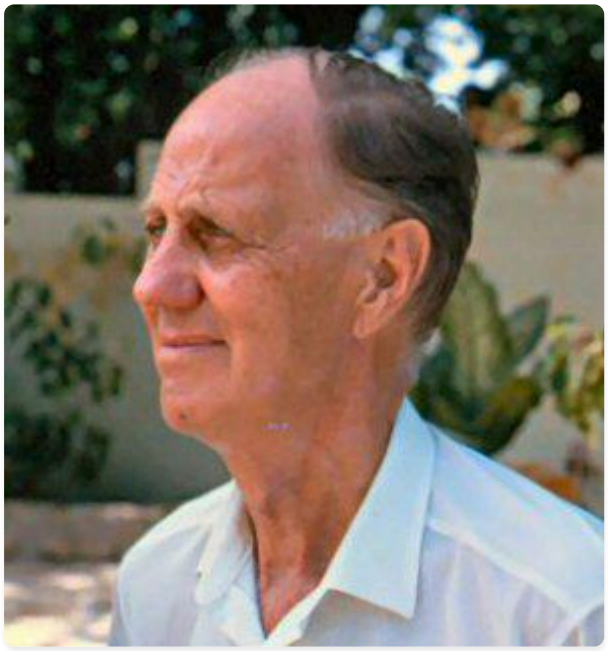
```
Universal House of Justice
```


Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh
Revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas
Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988
original written in Arabic and Persian.

Comments

January 20. On this date in 1905, Artemus Lamb, an American Bahá'í who pioneered to South and Central America, and served as a Counsellor from 1968 to 1985, was born in Iowa.

January 20. On this date in 1905, Artemus Lamb, an American Bahá'í who pioneered to South and Central America, and served as a Counsellor from 1968 to 1985, was born in Iowa.



Comments

January 21. On this date in 2015, an individual wrote the UHJ about "interlinear editions of Baha´’i´ Writings" receiving the reply that these "are unnecessary for Baha´’i´s, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation."

Original file: 0287.html (position #56)

January 21. On this date in 2015, an individual wrote the UHJ about "interlinear editions of Baha´’i´ Writings" receiving the reply that "interlinear editions of the Baha´’i´ Writings are unnecessary for Baha´’i´s, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation. Those who wish to compare the translation with the Arabic or Persian text ..."

> *8 March 2015*
>
> *Dear Baha´’i´ Friend,*

Your email letter of 21 January 2015, regarding interlinear editions of Baha´i´ Writings and the availability of the Computer Translation Aid (CTA) software, has been received by the Universal House of Justice, which has asked us to respond as follows.

The custom of publishing interlinear editions of the Qur'a´n arose out of particular conditions and assumptions within Isla´m that do not exist in the Baha´i´ Faith. Although such editions served the need for non-Arabic speakers to understand what they were reading, interlinear editions of the Baha´i´ Writings are unnecessary for Baha´i´s, as believers who do not know the original languages are free to read the Writings in translation. Those who wish to compare the translation with the Arabic or Persian text can do so easily enough by referring to the relevant editions, while printing both in juxtaposition would tend to distract all other readers from their primary focus – the reading and study of the Text.

Your suggestion regarding the benefits of an open availability of the CTA software has been noted.

With loving Baha´i´ greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

January 21. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi met with David Ben Gurion. In the chapter titled "The Heart and Nerve Centre" in her book "The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith", Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting.

Original file: 0286.html (position #55)

January 21. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi met with David Ben Gurion. In the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting...

> *In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's*

representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy, as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.

The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information

As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest

home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to **Ben Gurion**, *explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The* **Prime Minister** *himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.*

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Religious Affairs** *and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated December 13, 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:*

> *"...I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State.*
>
> *In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith."*

The victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the **Covenant-breakers** *in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the* **Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji**. *Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President,* **Secretary-General and Member-at-Large** *of the* **International Bahá'í Council** *(whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose)*

to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue it was removed by Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff — two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

> *PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952. His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani,*
>
> *World Head of the Bahá'í Faith,*
>
> *Haifa. Your Eminence, I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister. As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem. May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, as we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group? The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.*
>
> *Yours sincerely,*
>
> *S. Eynath*
>
> *Legal Adviser*

It is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the

President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of April 26, 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the President and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines, as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt. Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and it constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Bab, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside Shoghi Effendi, the former with his European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi we all withdrew and walked about he gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On April 29th the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine... I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On May 5th the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: "...It was a great pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel... If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem..." The time for this return call was set for the afternoon of May 26th and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President

and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on June 3rd to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi..." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.

On September 24, 1951, a cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi to all NSAs announced that after "prolonged, delicate negotiations involving Ministries of Finance and Religious Affairs and Haifa Municipality have culminated in agreement in principle to purchase approximately twenty-two thousand meter area, estimated value hundred eighteen thousand dollars, situated on slope of Mount Carmel."

Acquisition of Area on Mount Carmel

Announce to National Assemblies of Bahá'í world that prolonged, delicate negotiations involving Ministries of Finance and Religious Affairs and Haifa Municipality have culminated in agreement in principle to purchase approximately twenty-two thousand meter area, estimated value hundred eighteen thousand dollars, situated on slope of Mount Carmel overlooking resting-place of Greatest Holy Leaf and eastern approaches to Báb's Sepulcher.

Acquisition of area extending from heart to ridge of mountain safeguards precincts of sacred Mausoleum now in process of erection, broadens basis of administrative structure of rising World Center of Faith in Holy Land, may induce civil authorities to abandon project construction of arterial road crossing diagonally Bahá'í international endowments, and facilitates extension of terraces ultimately stretching from foot to crown of God's Holy Mountain.

Contemplating transfer part of title deeds of land in question to Israel branches of American, Indian National Assemblies, reserving remainder for future transfer to other National Assemblies following upon incorporation of their respective branches on soil of Holy Land.

> *--Shoghi*
>
> *[Cablegram, September 24, 1951]*

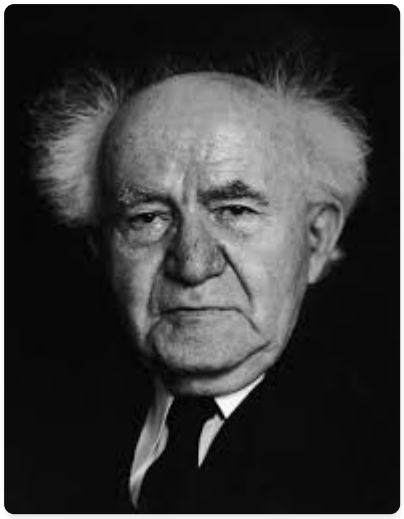
On December 16, 1950, a little over a year after the international recognition of the State of Israel, the mansion at Mazra'a was leased from the Israeli government by the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'u'lláh lived there from 1877 until 1879, before moving to the Mansion at Bahjí.

The transaction is described in Baha'i News, no. 244, June 1951, p. 4

> ***Masra'ih is a Moslem religious endowment, and it is consequently impossible, under existing laws in this country, for it to be sold. However, as the friends are aware, the Ministry of Religions, due to the direct intervention of the Minister himself, Rabbi Maimon, consented, in the face of considerable opposition, to deliver Masra'ih to the Baha'is as a Holy Place to be visited by Baha'i pilgrims. This means that we rent it from the Department of Moslem and Druze affairs in the Ministry of Religions. The head of this Department is also a Rabbi, Dr. Hirschberg. Recently he, his wife and party, visited all the Baha'i properties in Haifa and 'Akka, following upon a very pleasant tea party in the Western Pilgrim House with the members of the International Baha'i Council.***

The mansion at Mazra'a would later be purchased by the Bahá'í Administrative Order from the Israeli government as reported in Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968-1973, published 1976; Ridván Message 1973, p. 119

> *The Mansion of Mazra'ih, often referred to by the beloved Guardian as one of the "twin mansions" in which the Blessed Beauty resided after nine years within the walled prison-city of 'Akká, and dear to the hearts of the believers by reason of its associations with their Lord, has at last been purchased together with 24,000 square meters of land extending into the plain on its eastward side.*



Comments

January 21. On this date in 1914, Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl-i-Gulpáygání, noted Bahá’í scholar in the time of Bahá’u’lláh, died in Cairo, Egypt. One of the few Apostles of Bahá’u’lláh who never actually met Bahá’u’lláh, he chose the alias Abu'l-Fadl (progenitor of virtue) for himself.

Original file: 0285.html (position #54)

January 21. On this date in 1914, Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl-i-Gulpáygání, noted Bahá’í scholar in the time of Bahá’u’lláh, died in Cairo, Egypt. One of the few Apostles of Bahá’u’lláh who never actually met Bahá’u’lláh, he chose the alias Abu'l-Fadl (progenitor of virtue) for himself. 'Abdu’l-Bahá wrote, referring to *The Brilliant Proof*, "Each one of you should have a copy. Read, memorize and reflect upon it."

Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl was born in a village near Gulpaygan, Iran, sometime in the months of June or July 1844. In 1868 he left to Isfahan to study Islamic sciences at one of the religious colleges in the city. In October 1873, Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl moved to Tehran, where he had his first encounters with Bahá’ís in the beginning of 1876. Abu'l-Fadl, at one point, met

an uneducated cloth-seller, named Aqa 'Abdu'l-Karim, with whom he would have discussions over difficult religious questions.

In the next several months, Abu'l-Fadl met with some of the leading Bahá'ís including Nabíl-i-Akbar, Mirza Isma'il Dhabih and Aqa Mirza Haydar 'Ali Ardistani. While he was at Mirza Isma'il Dhabih's house, he read two of Bahá'u'lláh's tablets, the *Lawh-i-Ra'ís* (Tablet of the Chief) and the *Lawh-i-Fu'ád* (Tablet of Fu'ad Pasha), which contain prophecies both of the fall of the Ottoman Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz and vizier 'Ali Páshá. He determined that if the events portrayed in those tablets came to pass, he would believe in Bahá'u'lláh, and a few months later, Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl accepted the Bahá'í Faith and became a Bahá'í on September 20, 1876.

Juan Cole describes these events in his "Lawh-i-Fu'ád: notes by Juan Cole"...

> *Speaking with the voice of God (using the royal "we"), Bahá'u'lláh predicts that Alí Páshá, then grand vizier, will be deposed (the verb is 'azala, which is used of deposing kings). He says, too, that God will "lay hold" (the verb is akhadha, to take, seize) of Sultán AbdulAzíz (he is called amiruhum, literally, "their prince" or "their commander").* ***Although Bahá'u'lláh was correct that neither of these powerful men had long at the top in 1869, his prophecy, if taken literally, actually reverses their true fates.*** *Alí Páshá was never deposed, but rather died in office in 1871. It was Sultán AbdulAzíz who was deposed, in the Constitutional Revolution of spring, 1876, shortly after which he committed suicide. Obviously, if Bahá'u'lláh had merely meant to predict that eventually these two men would die, then the prophecy was not very remarkable. Rather, he seems to have believed that Alí Páshá would fall from the Sultán's favor, and that some dramatic event would overtake the Sultán.*

As soon as he became a Bahá'í, Abu'l-Fadl began to teach the new religion to others, and when news spread of his conversion away from Islam, he was removed from the religious college. He found a new position as a teacher at a school for Zoroastrian children that was established by Mánikchi Sáhib, an Indian Parsi. During his time at the school, a number of Zoroastrians converted to the Bahá'í Faith including Ustad Javanmard and Mulla Bahram Akhtar-Khavari. He continued to teach the Bahá'í Faith during the next ten years that he spent in Tehran, and helped Mírzá Husyan Hamadani produce an account of the history of the Bábí and Bahá'í religions, the *Tarikh-i-Jadid* (The New History), which was

commissioned by Mánikchi Sáhib. In Tehran, he was also imprisoned on three occasions. He was first imprisoned in December 1876 when it was found that he had converted to the Bahá'í Faith; he was released after five months. He was next imprisoned in 1882-83 for nineteen months, with fifty or so other Bahá'ís in Tehran, when the governor of the city, Kamran Mirza, ordered their arrests at the instigation of Sayyid Sadiq Sanglaji, a religious leader in the city. Then, in October 1885 he was imprisoned for another six months, once again, due to orders from Kamran Mirza.

After his 1882 imprisonment, he began extensive travels throughout the Persian Empire, especially after he received letters from Bahá'u'lláh in 1886 asking him to travel to teach the Bahá'í Faith. It was principally through his writings that the Bahá'í Faith was presented to the Jews of Iran in such a way as to bring a large number of them into accepting Bahá'u'lláh. During his travels in Iran he visited Kashan, Isfahan, Yazd and Tabriz. In 1888 and the three years thereafter he travelled to Ashgabat, Samarkand, and Bukhara. In Samarkand, his teaching efforts allowed for the conversion of the first Afghan to become Bahá'í outside of Afghanistan, Dr. 'Ata'u'llah Khan.

In 1894 Abu'l-Fadl spent ten months with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 'Akká, then in 1894 went to Cairo, where he settled for several years. Abu'l-Fadl became friends with writers and magazine publishers, and many articles that he authored appeared in the Egyptian press. In 1896, when Nasiru'd-Din Shah was assassinated in Iran, an enemy of the Bahá'ís, Za'imu'd-Dawlih, used the rumour that the assassination had been performed by Bahá'ís, to cause a massacre of the Bahá'ís in Egypt. When Abu'l-Fadl, stood up in defence for the Bahá'ís and stated that he himself was a Bahá'í, his allegiance became public; then when his two books *Fara'id* and *Al-Duraru'l-Bahiyyih* were published in 1897-1900 the al-Azhar University decreed that Abu'l-Fadl was an infidel.

Between 1900 and 1904 he travelled to Paris and the United States, by request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where his talks and writings enabled the fledgling Bahá'í communities to gain confidence and a clear understanding of the religion. During his travels, he was accompanied by Ethel Jenner Rosenberg and Laura Clifford Barney, an American Bahá'í. In Paris, his talks were translated by Anton Haddad, and over thirty people became Bahá'ís. Then in the autumn of 1901 travelled to the United States, and specifically to Chicago, where the largest Bahá'í community was, and gave a large number of talks. Then in December 1901, Abu'l-Fadl travelled to Washington, D.C. and gave talks to both Bahá'ís and the general population. During this time, he also continuously worked on an introductory book on the Bahá'í Faith.

Abu'l-Fadl then travelled to the Green Acre Bahá'í School in Eliot, Maine where he stayed

during the months of July and August of 1903 and lectured to a Bahá'í audience. In 1904, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked that Abu'l-Fadl return to the Middle East, and the Bahá'ís held a large farewell gathering for him in New York on November 29, 1904.

Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl lived most of his later years in Cairo until his death on January 21, 1914. During his final years, he also visited Beirut and Haifa. Abu'l-Fadl was in Egypt when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Egypt in August 1910, and he stayed near 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Alexandria in mid 1911. Near the end of 1912, Abu'l-Fadl started to become ill, and Aqa Muhammad-Taqi Isfahani was able to move Abu'l-Fadl to his house in Cairo, where he remained until his death on January 21, 1914.

After his death, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a eulogy which can be found in Bahá'í Proofs. Moojon Momen, a Bahá'í historian, states that Abu'l-Fadl possessed a critical mind, and had a complete devotion to the Bahá'í Faith. Momen states that Abu'l-Fadl's writings "show a keen understanding of modern currents of thought remarkable in a man who only knew oriental languages." and was able to apply the Bahá'í teachings to a wide range of different issues.

Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl wrote on a wide range of Bahá'í subjects, including extensive amounts of material about the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's mission. He was consistently praised by the central figures of the Bahá'í Faith and Shoghi Effendi. His papers and letters include a wide range of presentations of the Bahá'í Faith for those of Christian and Jewish backgrounds, and his concepts in the presentation of the Bahá'í Faith continue to be important today. After his death, his papers, including several unfinished works, were taken to Ashkhabad, where his nephew lived; many of these papers were, however, lost during the Russian Revolution.

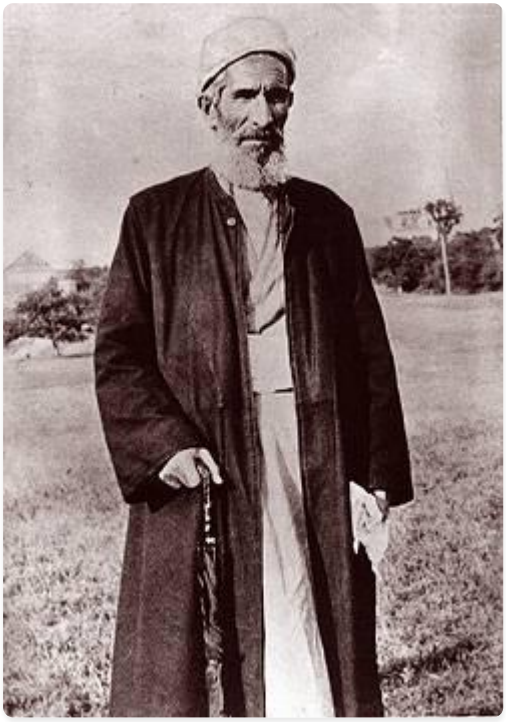
'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, referring to *The Brilliant Proof*...

> *"His Honour Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl has written a treatise answering the criticisms of a London preacher. Each one of you should have a copy. Read, memorize and reflect upon it. Then, when accusations and criticisms are advanced by those unfavourable to the Cause, you will be well armed."*

On March 24, 1943, the Universal House of Justice quoted Shoghi Effendi in the Reconciliation of Apparent Contradictions in the Bahá'í Writings that "In the past some of the friends were under the misapprehension that Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl taught that Abraham

and Zoroaster were the same person."

> *He was very interested in your notes concerning Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl's teachings on Zoroaster and the information on the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh's family and the ancient kings of Persia. In the past some of the friends were under the misapprehension that Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl taught that Abraham and Zoroaster were the same person.*
>
> *(24 March 1943)*



Comments

January 21. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "anniversaries of the birth and the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá, must be observed by the friends coming together, but work is not prohibited."

January 21. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Day of the Covenant Nov. 26th, and the Day of the Ascension, Nov. 28th, anniversaries of the birth and the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá, must be observed by the friends coming together, but work is not prohibited. In other words the friends must regard observance of these two anniversaries as obligatory--but suspension of work is not to be regarded as obligatory."

> *1619. Day of the Covenant, Day of the Ascension*
>
> *"The Day of the Covenant Nov. 26th, and the Day of the Ascension, Nov. 28th, anniversaries of the birth and the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá, must be observed by the friends coming together, but work is not prohibited. In other words the friends must regard observance of these two anniversaries as obligatory--but suspension of work is not to be regarded as obligatory."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual*

> *Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, January 21, 1951: Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, p. 89)*

Comments

January 21. On this date in 1923, Brigitte Hasselblatt, who would pioneer to Sweden, Denmark and Estonia and be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands, was born.

January 21. On this date in 1923, Brigitte Hasselblatt, who would pioneer to Sweden, Denmark and Estonia and be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands, was born.

Brigitte Hasselblatt was born on January 21, 1923, into a Baltic German family in Tallinn, Estonia. During World War II, the Hasselblatt family was evacuated to Germany, and after the war Brigitte moved to England, where she became a Bahá'í at a summer school in 1950.

In 1953 Brigitte settled in the Shetland Islands, a territory named by Shoghi Effendi in connection with the Ten Year Crusade, and in doing so became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

In 1956 Brigitte went on Pilgrimage and met Shoghi Effendi, who told her to introduce the Bahá'ís Faith to Estonia. Because it was impossible to go to the Soviet Union at that time, Brigitte chose to pioneer to Finland instead.

While in Finland Brigitte married Milton Lundblade, an American Bahá'í of Swedish descent. In 1961 they pioneered again, this time to Denmark, where there son Laurence was born. Because Milton was unable to find work there they soon had to move to the United States. For the next several years Brigitte worked as a school nurse in California. In

1963, their daughter Luise was born in Downey, California.

After her children were grown and her husband had died, Brigitte moved back to Finland as a pioneer in 1984, still waiting for an opportunity to return to Estonia in accordance with Shoghi Effendi's wishes. Her chance finally came in 1988.

Although a handful of people, predominantly Esperantists, had become Bahá'ís in Estonia prior to Brigitte's arrival, her flat in Tallinn quickly became the center of Bahá'í activity in the country. She was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baltic States in 1993 and remained a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Estonia after it was formed as a separate body in 1999.

On the advice of the Universal House of Justice, she retired in 2006 after many years of service.

Brigitte devoted her final years to writing her memoirs with assistance from a friend, Susanne Pfaff-Grossman. "The Life of a Pioneer" was originally published in German and was then translated into English by Brigitte herself.

Brigitte died on May 17, 2008 and is buried in her native Tallinn.

Comments

January 21. On this date in 1922, two months after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi wrote his first letter to American Bahá'ís.

January 21. On this date in 1922, two months after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, Shoghi Effendi wrote his first letter to American Bahá'ís.

> *Letter 1*
>
> *Dearly beloved brethren and sisters in `Abdu'l-Bahá:*
>
> *At this early hour when the morning light is just breaking upon the Holy Land, whilst the gloom of the dear Master's bereavement is still hanging thick upon the hearts, I feel as if my soul turns in yearning love and full of hope to that great company of His loved ones across the seas, who now share with us all the agonies of His separation.*
>
> *It is idle for me to emphasize how much the sorrowful ladies of the Holy Household look forward to the work that lies before the friends in the American continent, who in the past have rendered so glorious a service to His Cause and will now, faithful to His special love for them, carry on their mission still more gloriously than ever before. True, the shock has been too terrible and sudden for us all to recover from in so short a time, but whenever we recall His Sayings and read His Writings, hope springs in our hearts and gives us the peace that no other material comfort can give.*
>
> *How well I remember when, more than two years ago, the Beloved Master turning to a distinguished visitor of His, who was seated by Him in His garden,*

suddenly broke the silence and said:-- "My work is now done upon this plane; it is time for me to pass on to the other world." Did He not in more than one occasion state clearly and emphatically:--"Were ye to know what will come to pass after me, surely would ye pray that my end be hastened?" In a Tablet sent to Persia when the storm raised years ago by that Committee of Investigation was fiercely raging around Him, when the days of His incarceration were at their blackest, He reveals the following:--"Now in this world of being, the Hand of Divine Power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest Bounty and this wondrous Gift. Gradually whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this Holy Cycle shall appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth and the dayspring of the revelation of its Signs. Ere the close of this Century and of this Age, it shall be made clear and manifest how wondrous was that Springtide and how heavenly was that Gift!"

With such assuring Utterances and the unmistakable evidences of His sure and clear knowledge that His end was nigh, is there any reason why the followers of His Faith, the world over, should be perturbed? Are not the prayers He revealed for us sufficient source of inspiration to every worker in His Cause? Have not His instructions paved before us the broad and straight Path of Teaching? Will not His now doubly effective power of Grace sustain us, strengthen us and confirm us in our work for Him? Ours is the duty to strive by day and night to fulfill our own obligations and then trust in His Guidance and never failing Grace. Unity amongst the friends, selflessness in our labors in His Path, detachment from all worldly things, the greatest prudence and caution in every step we take, earnest endeavor to carry out only what is His Holy Will and Pleasure, the constant awareness of His Presence and of the example of His Life, the absolute shunning of whomsoever we feel to be an enemy of the Cause ... these, and foremost among them is the need for unity, appear to me as our most vital duties, should we dedicate our lives for His service. Should we in this spirit arise to serve Him, what surer and greater promise have we than the one His Glorious Father, Bahá'u'lláh, gives us in His Most Holy Book*:--"Verily, We behold you from Our Realm of Effulgent Glory, and shall graciously aid whosoever ariseth for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Celestial Concourse and a company of Our chosen angels."*

How dearly all the Holy Leaves *[Descendants (feminine) of Bahá'u'lláh] cherish that memory of the departed Master, as He commented upon the fresh tidings that poured in from that continent, admiring the untiring activity of the friends, the complete subordination of their material interests to those of the Cause, the*

remarkable spread of the Movement in their midst and their staunch firmness in the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. It is these encouraging reflections of the Master about His loved ones in America and the tests intellectual rather than physical which He said He would send to them to purify them and make ever brighter than before--it is these comments and promises of His that make of the Movement in that land such a potential force in the world today. The Beloved Master's cable to the friends in that region is a clear indication of the presence of those counteracting forces that may usher in those storms of tests that the Master Himself has said will ultimately be for the good of the Cause in that land.

And finally, the ladies of the Sacred Household and we, the rest of His kindred and family, will pray at His Hallowed Shrine for every one of you and He will surely watch over and enhance in the course of time that noble part of His heritage that He has bequeathed to His friends in the Far West; friends from whom in return He expects so much and whom He has loved and still doth love so dearly.

Your sincere co-worker in His Cause,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

January 21st, 1922.

Comments

January 22. On this date in 1872, in 'Akká, a group of Bahá'ís, including Salmání, killed three Azalís (Siyyid Muhammad Isfahání, Áqá Ján Ka'j Kuláh and another person).

Original file: 0281.html (position #50)

January 22. On this date in 1872, in 'Akká, a group of Bahá'ís, including Salmání, killed three Azalís (Siyyid Muhammad Isfahání, Áqá Ján Ka'j Kuláh and another person).

The reason given for the murders was that Siyyid Muhammad Isfahání, Nasr'ulláh Tafríshí, Áqá Ján Ka'j Kuláh and Ridá Qulí kept vigil from the second story window of a building overlooking the land gate to ensure no followers of Bahá'u'lláh would have access to the prison city. For some time they had been successful at preventing the entrance of pilgrims, some of whom who had spend some six months even traveling on foot. This also precluded the possibility of communications from 'Akká reaching the believers in other lands. After two years and a few months, Bahá'u'lláh was released from the His cell and was free to walk among the prison population. Some of the friends, including Salmání, decided to get rid of these enemies and, during the night, went to their place and killed Siyyid Muhammad, Áqá Ján and another person.

Bahá'u'lláh was taken to the Governorate where He was interrogated and held for 70 hours.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was thrown into prison and kept in chains the first night. Twenty-five other Bahá'ís were also imprisoned and shackled.

Ilyás 'Abbúd put a barricade between his house and the house of 'Údí Khammár, which he had rented for use by Bahá'u'lláh's family.

The murderers would be imprisoned for seven years.

Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Isfahání has been described by Shoghi Effendi as the "Antichrist of the Bahá'í Revelation." He was a man of corrupt character and great personal ambition who had induced Mírzá Yaḥyá to oppose Bahá'u'lláh and to claim prophethood for himself. Although he was an adherent of Mírzá Yaḥyá, Siyyid Muḥammad was one of the four Azalis exiled with Bahá'u'lláh to 'Akká. He continued to agitate and plot against Bahá'u'lláh. In describing the circumstances of his death, Shoghi Effendi has written in *God Passes By*:

> *A fresh danger now clearly threatened the life of Bahá'u'lláh. Though He Himself had stringently forbidden His followers, on several occasions, both verbally and in writing, any retaliatory acts against their tormentors, and had even sent back to Beirut an irresponsible Arab convert, who had meditated avenging the wrongs suffered by his beloved Leader, seven of the companions clandestinely sought out and slew three of their persecutors, among whom were Siyyid Muḥammad and Áqá Ján.*
>
> *The consternation that seized an already oppressed community was indescribable. Bahá'u'lláh's indignation knew no bounds. "Were We," He thus voices His emotions, in a Tablet revealed shortly after this act had been committed, "to make mention of what befell Us, the heavens would be rent asunder and the mountains would crumble." "My captivity," He wrote on another occasion, "cannot harm Me. That which can harm Me is the conduct of those who love Me, who claim to be related to Me, and yet perpetrate what causeth My heart and My pen to groan." [God Passes By, pages 189-190]*

On September 20, 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote (also here) Kalimát Press about the publication of Ustad Salmani's *My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh* noting it "untimely and unwise" due to passages where believers refer to him as "You being God, Uncle" and other "unpleasant and unworthy" stories.

Comments

January 22. On this date in 1992, an individual wrote the UHJ, who later responded that "The House of Justice was sorry to learn from your letter that your son has recently informed you that he is a homosexual...You will, no doubt, want to urge your son to seek appropriate counseling..."

Original file: 0280.html (position #49)

January 22. On this date in 1992, an individual wrote the UHJ, who later responded that "The House of Justice was sorry to learn from your letter that your son has recently informed you that he is a homosexual...You will, no doubt, want to urge your son to seek appropriate counseling..."

> *Responding to Homosexuality 1 MARCH 1992*

To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your letter of 22 January 1992 has been received by the Universal House of Justice, and we are to provide the following response.

The House of Justice was sorry to learn from your letter that your son has recently informed you that he is a homosexual. *It commends your attitude of compassion and your efforts to both maintain harmony in your marriage and to keep open the lines of communication to your son. In answer to your specific question, there is little in the Bahá'í writings that specifically points to the causes of homosexuality itself, but as the House of Justice has emphasized in past letters to individuals who sought its advice on this question, there is much that concerns the nature of man, his inner life and growth, and the way to a true Bahá'í life. In a letter to an individual believer, the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, gave the following advice:*

> *No matter how devoted and fine the love may be between people of the same sex, to let it find expression in sexual acts is wrong. To say that it is ideal is no excuse. Immorality of every sort is really forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and* ***homosexual relationships He looks upon as such, besides being against nature.***
>
> *To be afflicted this way is a great burden to a conscientious soul. But* ***through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap.***
>
> *God judges each soul on its own merits. The Guardian cannot tell you what the attitude of God would be towards a person who lives a good life in most ways, but not in this way. All he can tell you is that* ***it is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and that one so afflicted should struggle and struggle again to overcome it.*** *We must be hopeful of God's mercy but not impose upon it.****[1]***

In general, the House of Justice urges you to avoid dwelling on thoughts of guilt

which you, as a parent, would likely experience, and to continue to demonstrate love and acceptance toward your son; such an attitude, however, should imply no agreement with his attitude towards homosexuality. ***You will, no doubt, want to urge your son to seek appropriate counseling; in this connection you are encouraged to seek the assistance of your National Spiritual Assembly, which has often dealt with such cases, and can most probably assist you in identifying individuals who are experienced in this area and whose views on homosexuality are basically compatible with those of the Bahá'í Faith.***

Regarding your husband's refusal to permit your son to return home, it is understandable that a parent might feel deeply confused and angry when confronted with such questions which go to the very root of what it means to be a human being and what it means to educate and raise a child. Prayer, faith in God, loving consultation and patience will aid you to deal with this difficulty. As for your family members who are causing you further anguish, it is perhaps also to be expected that reactions to such inherently perplexing questions, nowadays compounded more than ever by the general disarray in moral thinking, tend toward extremes, either of resignation or condemnation. You are obliged to hew your own course, as illuminated by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Whether you can persuade anyone of the correctness of your responses, which seek to preserve your relationship to your son and also to avoid alienating your husband, is secondary; the main thing is that you strive to deal with these difficulties in a manner consistent with the spirit of the Cause of God, which is neither harsh and maledictory nor excessively liberal and forbearing.

Be assured of the ardent prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that your marriage may be fortified and that your son may be divinely guided and assisted to overcome the problem which has beset him. It will also offer prayers that you may have the strength and wisdom to deal with this problem.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

[1] *LG, no. 1223.*

Comments

January 22. On this date in 1976, the Universal House of Justice wrote that "The important thing is to impress upon Bahá'í children that personal friendship and individual companionship with children of Covenant-breakers must be avoided."

Original file: 0279.html (position #48)

January 22. On this date in 1976, the Universal House of Justice wrote a memorandum to the International Teaching Centre emphasizing that "The important thing is to impress upon Bahá'í children that personal friendship and individual companionship with children of Covenant- breakers must be avoided."

> ***The Bahá'í students who go to schools which children of Covenant-breakers*** *attend should be made, lovingly and wisely, to understand that* ***as Bahá'ís they cannot and must not choose children of Covenant-breakers as their personal friends, without making the matter into an open issue before the school.*** *Thus, there should be no hard and fast rule to the effect that no Bahá'í child should be enrolled in a school where children of*

Covenant-breakers are also enrolled, or that they should leave a school as soon as a child of a Covenant-breaker enters it. ***The important thing is to impress upon Bahá'í children that personal friendship and individual companionship with children of Covenant- breakers must be avoided.*** *Should it be found that in a particular case the situation is such that the policy outlined above cannot be followed, then in such cases, which we hope can be kept to a minimum,* ***it would be desirable for Bahá'í children to change schools.***

(From a memorandum dated 22 January 1976 to the International Teaching Centre)

Comments

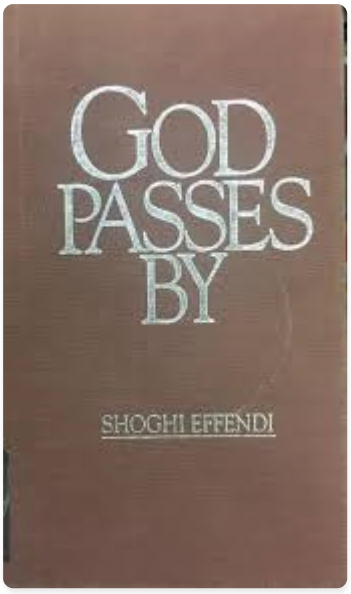
January 22. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi finished writing "God Passes By". Published later that year, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb in 1844, "God Passes By" serves as a historical review by Shoghi Effendi of the first century of the Bahá'í Faith.

Original file: 0278.html (position #47)

January 22. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi finished writing *God Passes By*. Published later that year, to coincide with the one-hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb in 1844, *God Passes By* serves as a historical review by Shoghi Effendi of the first century of the Bahá'í Faith. The book is divided into four periods, covering the ministries of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi upto the writing of the book.

In *God Passes By* Shoghi Effendi addresses some contentious issues, dedicating chapters to

such topics as *The Attempt on the Life of the Sháh and Its Consequences*, *The Rebellion of Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí*, *Attacks on Bahá'í Institutions*.



Comments

January 22. On this date in 1984, the UHJ reiterated the figure of 20,000 for the number of early Babi/Bahá'í martyrs as 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi mentioned numerous times. Some historians estimate the number of early Babi/Bahá'í martyrs was not 20,000, but 2,000 to 3,000.

Original file: 0277.html (position #46)

January 22. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice reiterated (also here) that the figure of 20,000 for the number of early Babi/Bahá'í martyrs is "clearly recorded" in "the official government historical record of events in Iran" and as 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi mentioned numerous times. Some historians estimate the number of early Babi/Bahá'í martyrs was not 20,000, but 2,000 to 3,000.

Department of the Secretariat

22 January 1984

Dr. Iain S. Palin

“Esslemont” 13 Summerhill Prehen Londonderry BT47 2PL United Kingdom Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your letter of 20 December 1983 has been received by the Universal House of Justice which instructs us to send you the following reply.

Enlisteent in Armed Forces The attached “Summary of the Guardian’s Instructions on the Obligations of Bahá'ís in Connection with Military Service”, with the added amplification of the Universal House of Justice about voluntary enlistment, will answer your queries on this subject. The Ulster Defence Regiment and the police force in Northern Ireland are, as you state, armed forces.

20,000 Martyrs We are to inform you that the well-known Bahá'í scholar, Fádil-i-Mázandarání, in his “Zuhúru’l-Haq”, states that the number of 20,000 is clearly recorded in the “Násikhu’t-Taváríkh”, which is the official government historical record of events in Iran, written by Muhammad Taqí, Lisánu'l-Mulk-i-Sipihr.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosure

cc: International Teaching Centre Board of Counsellors in Europe National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom

Comments

January 23. On this date in 1924, Shoghi Effendi wrote Queen Marie of Romania "I am deeply touched by the splendid appreciation Your Majesty has graciously penned for the Bahá'í World, and wish to offer my heartfelt and abiding gratitude for this striking evidence of Your Majesty's sustained ..."

Original file: 0276.html (position #45)

January 23. On this date in 1924, Shoghi Effendi wrote Queen Marie of Romania "I am deeply touched by the splendid appreciation Your Majesty has graciously penned for the Bahá'í World, and wish to offer my heartfelt and abiding gratitude for this striking evidence of Your Majesty's sustained interest in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh."

> *Your Majesty,*

> *I am deeply touched by the splendid appreciation Your Majesty has graciously penned for the Bahá'í World, and wish to offer my heartfelt and abiding gratitude for this striking evidence of Your Majesty's sustained interest in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.*
>
> *I was moved to undertake its translation in person, and feel certain that the unnumbered followers of the Faith in both the East and the West will feel greatly stimulated in their unceasing labours for the eventual establishment of the Most Great Peace foretold by Bahá'u'lláh.*
>
> *I am presenting to Your Majesty, through the care of Miss Martha Root, a precious manuscript in the handwriting of Bahá'u'lláh, illumined by a devoted follower of His Faith in Tihran.*
>
> *May it serve as a token of my admiration for the spirit that has prompted Your Majesty to voice such noble sentiments for a struggling and persecuted Faith.*
>
> *With the assurance of my prayers at the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh for Your Majesty's welfare and happiness,*
>
> *I am yours very sincerely,*
>
> *Shoghi*

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim:

> *"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."*

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders

who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

January 23. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "HEARTILY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES TENACITY MODESTY UNWAVERING DEVOTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE HOWEVER DESIGNATE HER MARTYR."

January 23. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "HEARTILY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES TENACITY MODESTY UNWAVERING DEVOTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE HOWEVER DESIGNATE HER MARTYR."

> *151-Lydia Zamenhof*
>
> *[CIRCA 23 JANUARY 1946]*
>
> *HEARTILY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF.**78** HER NOTABLE SERVICES TENACITY MODESTY UNWAVERING DEVOTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE HOWEVER DESIGNATE HER MARTYR.*
>
> ***78.** Miss Zamenhof and her family, who were Jewish, had been arrested and taken to a Nazi concentration camp in 1942. Two years later, in August 1944, Lidia died in the death camp at Treblinka. Commemorative observances were held for her in Bahá'í communities throughout Canada and the United States in October 1946.*

On January 29, 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December 1938, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> *'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.*

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> *Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.*

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread

the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> *...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.*
>
> *Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:*
>
> > *EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.*
>
> *His response was decisive:*
>
> > *APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]*

> *Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:*
>
> > *REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.*
>
> *She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced fellahin, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.*
>
> *She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.*

From the following section:

> *Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:*

> *Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]*

In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

> *A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:*
>
> > *HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]*
>
> *She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.*

Comments

January 23. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "we cannot be sure how much or how little of the four Gospels are accurate and include the words of Christ and His undiluted teachings, all we can be sure of...is that what has been quoted by Bahá'u'lláh and the Master...absolutely authentic."

Original file: 0274.html (position #43)

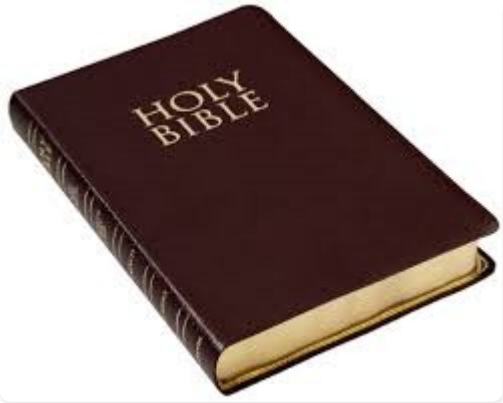
January 23. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "we cannot be sure how much or how little of the four Gospels are accurate and include the words of Christ and His undiluted teachings, all we can be sure of, as Bahá'ís, is that what has been quoted by Bahá'u'lláh and the Master must be absolutely authentic."

From "The Old and New Testaments, Extracts by Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and Universal House of Justice"...

> *...we cannot be sure how much or how little of the four Gospels are accurate and include the words of Christ and His undiluted teachings, all we can be sure of, as Bahá'ís, is that what has been quoted by Bahá'u'lláh and the Master must be absolutely authentic. As many times passages in the Gospel of St. John are quoted we may assume that it is his Gospel and much of it accurate.*
>
> *(23 January 1944 to an individual believer)*

On July 28, 1936, Shoghi Effendi stated...

> *1688. Genesis 22:9--Sacrifice of Ishmael*
>
> *"As to the question raised by the Racine Assembly in connection with Bahá'u'lláh's statement in the 'Gleanings' concerning the sacrifice of Ishmael: Although this statement does not agree with that made in the Bible, Genesis 22:9, the friends should unhesitatingly, and for reasons that are only too obvious, give precedence to the sayings of Bahá'u'lláh which, it should be pointed out, are fully corroborated by the Qur'an, which book is more authentic than the Bible including both the New and the Old Testaments. The Bible is not wholly authentic, and in this respect is not to be compared with the Qur'an, and should be wholly subordinated to the authentic writings of Bahá'u'lláh."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, July 28, 1936: Bahá'í News, No. 103, p. 1, October 1936)*



Comments

January 23. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter addressed "To all National Spiritual Assemblies" concerning Bahá’í activities for the International Year of Peace declared by the United Nations, in anticipation of the permanent peace of the world which 'Abdu'l-Bahá ha

Original file: 0273.html (position #42)

January 23. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter addressed "To all National Spiritual Assemblies" concerning Bahá’í activities for the International Year of Peace declared by the United Nations, in anticipation of the permanent peace of the world which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had predicted would occur prior to the year 2000. Those of you around in the 1980's might remember the anticipatory build up we shared.

The Universal House of Justice

23 January 1985

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

1986 has been named the **International Year of Peace** *by the United Nations. Considering the dangers surrounding mankind and the remedial prospects of the* **Lesser Peace** *to which Bahá'u'lláh has summoned the nations, we embrace this God-sent opportunity to proclaim ever more widely and convincingly the vitalizing principles upon which, as our Teachings emphatically assert, a lasting peace must be founded. The nature and variety of the proclamation activities which the Bahá'í community will undertake, during 1986 and beyond, will be outlined in detail later. We wish now to indicate some of the ideas we are contemplating, so that you may sense what to expect and how to prepare for your own participation.*

In addition to projects to be initiated at the World Center, these ideas include:

- *Calling upon local and national Bahá'í communities to sponsor a wide range of activities which will engage the attention of people from all walks of life to various topics relevant to peace, such as: the role of women, the elimination of racism, the eradication of prejudice, the promotion of education, the extension of social and economic development, the adoption of a world auxiliary language, the establishment of world government;*

- *Mounting a publicity campaign which will make use of such themes as "world peace through world religion," "world peace through world education," "world peace through world language," "world peace through world law"—a campaign which could lead to discussion of these subjects in small or large gatherings, at local or national levels, and perhaps in collaboration with organizations promoting such ideas;*

- *Urging the publishing within and without the Bahá'í community of a wide assortment of literature, posters and other graphic materials on peace;*

- *Requesting Bahá'í magazines—children, youth, adult—whether intended for internal or external circulation, to carry special features on peace;*

- *Inviting Bahá'í radio stations to devote particular attention to this theme;*

- *Asking the Associations for Bahá'í Studies to conduct programs on peace;*

- *Encouraging Bahá'í artists and musicians to contribute, and consider inviting their non-Bahá'í colleagues to contribute, to the effectiveness of such activities by giving expression through the various arts to important themes relating to world peace.*

In effect, we envision a proclamation campaign which will not only involve large public events and the use of the mass media, but will also engage people at the grassroots and at all other levels of society in a broad range of profoundly effective activities through which they will interact with the Bahá'í community in a sustained, worldwide effort to attend to the fundamental issues of peace, aided by the unique insights provided by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

As you contemplate what possibilities these and similar ideas suggest for your own plans, we advise you to take preparatory steps to hold within your jurisdiction, during 1986, local and national peace conferences to which public officials and other prominent persons should be invited. In those places where national conferences may not be possible, local conferences should certainly be held.

In some regions, neighboring National Assemblies may find it convenient to pool their resources and hold regional conferences instead of national ones. These need not be very large, but should be effective enough to make a good impression on the public as well as on the national Bahá'í communities involved. It is left to the initiative of the National Assemblies, in consultation with Continental Counselors, to hold such conferences.

Simultaneously as you make initial arrangements for the conferences, you will also want to find out what plans are being made by the governments and organizations in your respective countries, so that you will know beforehand how to coordinate your own programs with the programs of others in ways most conducive to the proclamation of the Faith and the mutual benefit of all concerned.

We would welcome any thoughts and suggestions you may have on the activities to be undertaken by you during the International Year of Peace.

Your planning efforts for 1986 must not, of course, interrupt the work of the Seven Year Plan. Indeed, the activities associated with the economic and social development of the Bahá'í community, the observance during 1985 of International Youth Year, and the anticipated activities for the peace campaign to

begin a year hence are mutually reinforcing and go far to enhance the teaching opportunities necessary to the successful completion of the Plan. We have every confidence that your continuing exertions to meet the new challenges resulting from the emergence of the Faith from obscurity will be richly rewarded by the Blessed Beauty; and we shall renew our supplications at the Holy Threshold that your brightest expectations may be surpassed by resounding triumph.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

On September 11, 1912, The Montreal Daily Star reported the following exchange: "“Are there any signs that the permanent peace of the world will be established in anything like a reasonable period?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was asked. “It will be established in this century,” he answered, ‘It will be universal in the twentieth century. All nations will be forced into it.’"

On July 29, 1974, the Universal House of Justice admitted "It is true that Abdu'l-Bahá made statements linking the establishment of the unity of nations to the twentieth century...world unity, which, as Abdu'l-Bahá assures us, will, in this century, be securely established."

1425. Peace Will Come

*"**It is true that Abdu'l-Bahá made statements linking the establishment of the unity of nations to the twentieth century**. For example: '...The fifth candle is the unity of nations--**a unity which, in this century, will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland....**' And, in 'The Promised Day is Come', following a similar statement quoted from 'Some Answered Questions', Shoghi Effendi makes this comment: 'This is the stage which the world is now approaching, **the stage of world unity, which, as Abdu'l-Bahá assures us, will, in this century, be securely established.**'*

"There is also this statement from a letter written in 1946 to an individual believer on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary:

'...All we know is that the Lesser and the Most Great Peace will come--their exact dates we do not know. The same is true as regards the possibility of a future war;

> *we cannot state dogmatically it will or will not take place--all we know is that mankind must suffer and be punished sufficiently to make it turn to God.'"*
>
> *(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice, July 29, 1974: Ibid.)*

Comments

January 23. On this date in 2012, Maryam Valapour gave a talk at the Ezri Center for Iran & Persian Gulf Studies at the University of Haifa titled "Applying Bahai Principles to Address Current Ethics and Policy Debates in Organ Transplantation."

Original file: 0272.html (position #41)

January 23. On this date in 2012, Maryam Valapour gave a talk at the Ezri Center for Iran & Persian Gulf Studies at the University of Haifa titled "Applying Bahai Principles to Address Current Ethics and Policy Debates in Organ Transplantation."

On September 13, 1968, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "making inquiry about instructions which may apply to organ transplants such as the heart or kidney." The Universal House of Justice replied "We have not come across anything specific in the writings on transplants of hearts and other organs or regarding the time of death, and the Universal House of Justice does not wish to make any statements on these points at this time."

Comments

January 23. On this date in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (née Mary Sutherland Maxwell) was buried in Haifa, adjacent to the home, originally a residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where she had resided since 1937 when she married Shoghi Effendi.

Original file: 0271.html (position #40)

January 23. On this date in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum (née Mary Sutherland Maxwell) was buried in Haifa, adjacent to the home, originally a residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where she had resided since 1937 when she married Shoghi Effendi.

> *Ruhiyyih Khanum's Funeral*
>
> *The funeral of Mrs Ruhiyyih Rabbani, 89, international dignitary of the Bahá'í Faith, was held on Sunday, January 23, at 2 pm. Mrs Rabbani was buried in Haifa, Israel, in a garden facing the home where she lived since 1937.*
>
> *The simple ceremony, which took place in Mrs Rabbani's home, consisted of readings from the Baha'i sacred scriptures. The Bahá'í obligatory prayer for the*

> *dead was recited. It is the only Bahá'í prayer which is to be recited in congregation; it is to be recited by one Bahá'í while all present stand.*
>
> *Mrs Rabbani's coffin was carried across the street to her final resting place by six pall bearers, from six different parts of the world. At the graveside, a prayer by Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, was read, which says, in part, "Within the garden of Thine immortality, before Thy countenance, let me abide forever, O Thou who art merciful unto me". This is not the obligatory prayer referred to previously.*
>
> *The rain, which had held off until the final minutes of the funeral, poured down.*
>
> *About 1000 people attended the funeral, including Mr Chris Greenshields, Minister-Counsellor of the Canadian Embassy; Mrs Marsha Von Duerckhein, Consul-General of the US Embassy; Mr Ariel Kenet of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Dr Roman Bronfman, Member of the Knesset; Mr Amram Mitzna, the Mayor of Haifa; and Mr Shmaryahu Biran, the Mayor of Acre. Dr Nissam Dana of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs represented the Israeli Government.*
>
> *Many of the Bahá'í Faith's senior officers attended, including members of the Universal House of Justice, international Counselors, and members of some 80 national Bahá'í governing councils from as far away as Mongolia and Samoa. Mr Jack McCants and Mrs Pat Locke represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í of the United States.*
>
> *Thousands of memorials are being held nationally and locally throughout the world.*

Mary Sutherland Maxwell was born on August 8, 1910, to William Sutherland Maxwell (the architect who would design the Shrine of the Bab and be named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Ellis Bolles Maxwell. Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

> *Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered*

> *blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.*

It was at this home that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his talk discussing his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America.

During her youth she twice traveled to Palestine for pilgrimage, the first time with her mother at age twelve and the second time with her mother's friends at age sixteen. It was during these pilgrimages that she first met Shoghi Effendi.

As a young woman, Mary had expressed a great desire to learn Spanish. However, her plans to travel to Republican Spain were thwarted with the Spanish Civil War. Instead, Mary chose to live with her cousin in Nazi Germany in 1935, a move which was endorsed by Shoghi Effendi. In Germany, Shoghi Effendi encouraged Mary to strengthen the fledgling Bahá'í community. The young Mary assimilated herself in German culture, wearing a dirndl and learning to speak German fluently. Whilst in Germany, Mary received an invitation from Shoghi Effendi to make a pilgrimage with her mother. Mother and daughter accepted the invitation.

Arriving in Haifa in January 1937 with her mother, she and Shoghi Effendi began a brief courtship. In February the couple were engaged, and Mary cabled her father to come as soon as he could to Haifa. On March 24 at the age of 26, Mary married Shoghi Effendi. The newlyweds made a trip to Switzerland and Shoghi Effendi introduced his young bride to his favorite sights in the country to which he would often travel. It was only a year after his wedding that Shoghi Effendi in 1938 praised Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria.

In 1951 Shoghi Effendi appointed her to the International Bahá'í Council and in 1952 a Hand of the Cause of God, as a replacement for her father who had died shortly before her appointment. She accompanied Shoghi Effendi during his various visits with the leadership of the newly-established State of Israel.

After Shoghi Effendi's death, for the remainder of her life, she traveled extensively and gave numerous talks. From 1969 through 1973, she undertook a Great African Safari. Around 1981, she spoke to the Persian Bahá'í community in Los Angeles "upbraiding them for settling in a such a decadent urban center, implying they should never have left Iran, and that if they had insisted on doing so should at least have had the decency to settle as missionaries in some remote village of the global South...When someone from the audience

asked where they should have settled instead, she replied in Persian that it was self-evident: *"Khar kih nistid"* ("you are not asses")."

She died on January 19, 2000, at the age of 89 in Haifa, Israel where she is buried at the Bahá'í World Centre.

Comments

January 23. On this date in 1945, on this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi advised about individuals who "should be shunned by their fellow-Bahá'ís" noting "that some people are spiritually sick and that their disease is, alas, contagious...grave danger of contagion...their perversity and waywardness.

Original file: 0270.html (position #39)

January 23. On this date in 1945, on this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi advised about individuals who "should be shunned by their fellow-Bahá'ís " noting "that some people are spiritually sick and that their disease is, alas, contagious." Contact with them "exposes one to grave danger of contagion...if we sympathise with them we only fortify their perversity and waywardness."

609. Bahá'ís Cannot Associate with Those Who Have Left the Cause and Are Associating with Covenant-Breakers

"There is no excuse for believers continuing to associate with ... and those who, knowing everything, still insist on doing so, ***should be shunned by their fellow-Bahá'ís****. The same applies to people who have left the Cause and associate with.... The point is that if the believers know and meet with people who are acquainted with* Covenant-breakers *there is no harm in this, for such individuals are not Bahá'ís and have nothing to do with the issues concerned. But those who have left the Cause, knowing all about such matters, and deliberately associate with* Covenant-breakers*, are well aware of what they do, and we must not associate with them at all. It is for the Local Assembly, guided by the N.S.A., to enforce such decisions and protect the Cause in its area of jurisdiction.*

"The friends should, without too much dwelling on these negative things, be made to understand that ***some people are spiritually sick and that their disease is, alas, contagious. Some recover from it, as did Mr. ... whose heart could not rest till he returned to the fold; others do not.*** *The Master and Bahá'u'lláh have taught us that associating with these souls is not likely to heal them at all, but on the contrary* ***exposes one to grave danger of contagion. The history of the Faith has proved this over and over again. The only way we can prove to such people that they are wrong is to censure their conduct; if we sympathise with them we only fortify their perversity and waywardness.****"*

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 23, 1945)

Comments

January 24. On this date in 2009, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, one in Sydney, Australia, and one in Madrid, Spain.

Original file: 0269.html (position #38)

January 24. On this date in 2009, three of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, one in Sydney, Australia, and one in Madrid, Spain.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the

Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the

International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco

Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Comments

January 24. On this date in 1922, Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine, addressed a letter to Shoghi Effendi proclaiming "I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement."

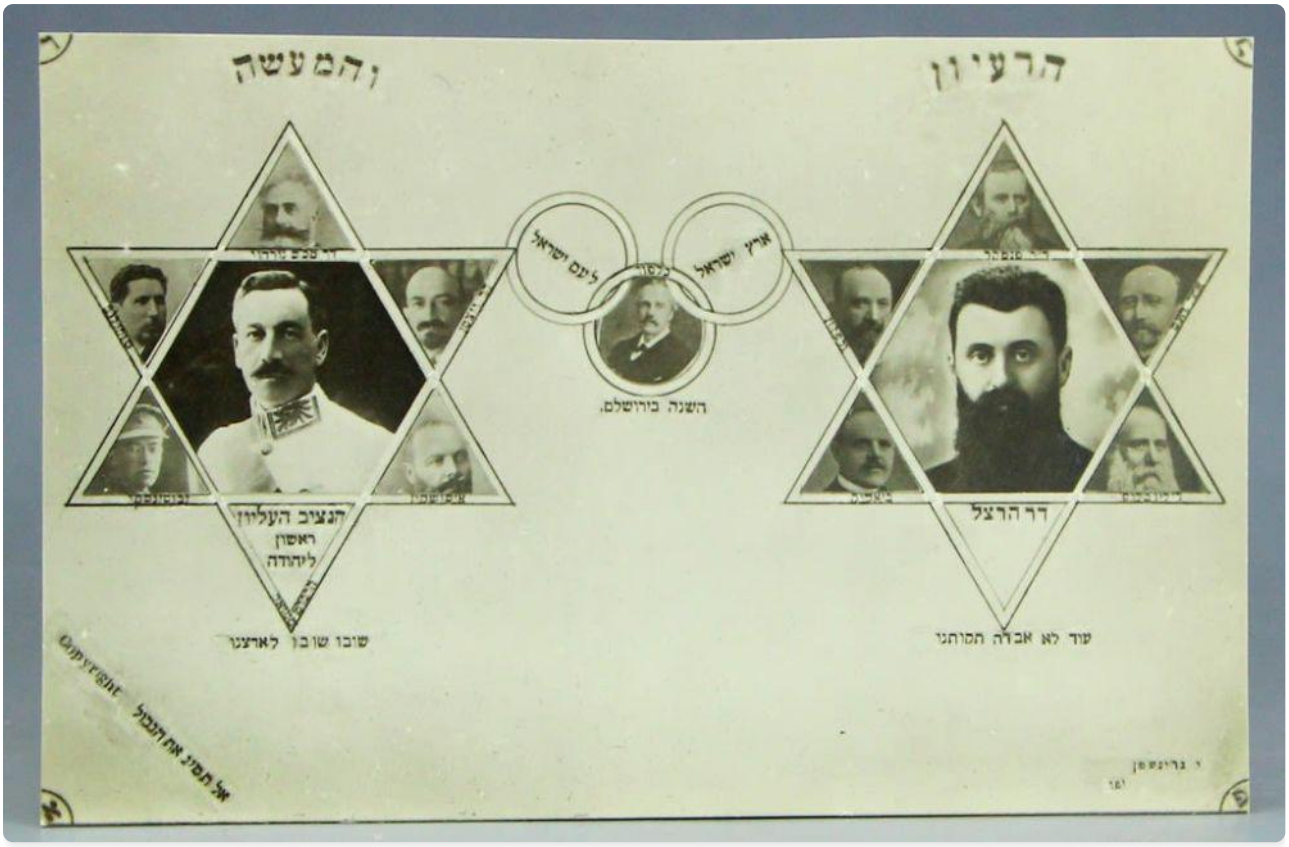
Original file: 0268.html (position #37)

A postcard with photos of Zionist leaders. Theodor Herzl and Herbert Samuel appear in center in Stars of David, linking them is the photo of Lord Balfour.

January 24. On this date in 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*. As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his

appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

> *While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:*
>
> > *Dear Mr. Rabbani,*
> >
> > *I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.*
> >
> > *Yours sincerely,*
> >
> > *Herbert Samuel*


והמעשה
הרעיון
ליקט ישראל
ארץ ישראל
השנה בירושלם.
הנציב העליון
ראשון
ליהודה
שיבו שובו לארצנו
דר הרצל
עוד לא אבדה תקותנו
Copyright אל תסיר את הנכתב

Comments

January 24. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote that an individual "cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society ... he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith."

Original file: 0267.html (position #36)

January 24. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the NSA of the U.S. admonishing the Assembly that an unnamed individual "cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith."

> *1394. New History Society--Avowed Enemies of the Faith*

> *"As regards ..., he should be kindly but firmly admonished by your Assembly that he cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed* ***enemies of the Faith*** *such as the* ***New History Society****; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be* ***outside the Faith****."*
>
> *(From a letter of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 24, 1957)*

Lewis and Ahmad at the head of our regiment
The parade halts at Madison Square and Fifth Ave.

Comments

January 24. On this date in 2002, Palle Bischoff died. He was the first Danish Bahá'í to become a Baha'i in Denmark and the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Greenland. He also served on the NSA of Scandinavia and Finland as Vice-Chair and the NSA of Denmark.

Original file: 0266.html (position #35)

January 24. On this date in 2002, Palle Bischoff died. He was the first Danish Bahá'í to become a Baha'i in Denmark and the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Greenland. He also served on the NSA of Scandinavia and Finland as Vice-Chair and the NSA of Denmark.

Palle Bischoff was born in Humlebaek, Denmark in 1925. He studied commercial science and obtained a degree in the field. He became a Bahá'í on November 17, 1947, and attended a Feast in Stockholm shortly after his conversion. In 1950 he chaired an evening at the Third European Teaching Conference in Copenhagen, and delivered a talk on Progressive Revelation.

In 1951 Palle was appointed to manage a fishing station at Edgesminde, Greenland for four months and another station in Govkussak in the winter by the Danish government, allowing him to become the first Bahá'í to pioneer to the country. He wrote the following to

the Greenland Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada:

> *"It is exciting and I pray that I will be able to light the fire of the love of God among the people there so that the unity and harmony of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will be manifested also in that country"*

He opened a ski school after retiring from managing the fishing stations, and lived in Greenland until 1954, when he returned to Denmark.

He served as Chairman of the 1956 Bahá'í Summer School of Moss, Norway. In 1957 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Scandinavia and Finland as Vice-Chair, and he served on that Assembly until 1963. In 1961 he was elected to the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Frederiksberg in Denmark.

In 1964 he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Denmark, and he served on the Assembly, or as an Auxiliary Board Member, until 2000. He was also elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Sollerod in 1964 and served on it until 1998.

The Universal House of Justice noted his "outstanding services" that "earned him an imperishable place in the annals of the Danish Bahá'í community" after his death.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum referenced Palle Bischoff in a letter dated October 30, 1951, written to the NSA of Canada "The departure of Mr. Bond for the Arctic made the Guardian very happy; this, as well as the sailing of Mr. Bischoff for Greenland, mark the opening stage of the campaign to carry the Faith to the Eskimos, a plan set forth by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and very dear to His heart."

> *October 30, 1951.*
>
> *National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.*
>
> *Your letters ... have been received, with enclosures, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.*
>
> *The Administrative Order is not a governmental or civic body, it is to regulate and guide the internal affairs of the Bahá'í community; consequently it works, according to its own procedure, best suited to its needs. A Bahá'í who does more*

than visit temporarily a community is considered for our administrative purposes as a resident and can vote and serve accordingly. Students in foreign lands, most obviously not residents, are registered as local Bahá'ís, and therefore entitled to do their share of work and play their part in the local community life. This should be pointed out to ... who seem to be confusing our internal administration with external practices which have no relation to it. As regards their personal attitudes the Guardian, remembering what a devoted worker ... has been in the past, is very sorry to see she is no longer active. He does not feel this will lead to either her happiness or that of ...; for, whenever we compromise with what is noblest and best in ourselves, we are the losers invariably.

The Guardian was delighted to hear the friends are at last responding to the urgent needs of the Plan and going forth as pioneers. Plans are concrete things, and not mere honors, and victories--like all other achievements in life--must be purchased at the cost of persistent efforts! He feels sure the Canadian Bahá'ís, perhaps slow to get under way, will display the counterpart of this British characteristic, and cling like bull dogs to their tasks, once they do get under way.

PIONEER TO GREENLAND

The departure of Mr. Bond 1 for the Arctic made the Guardian very happy; this, as well as the sailing of Mr. Bischoff 2 for Greenland, mark the opening stage of the campaign to carry the Faith to the Eskimos, a plan set forth by `Abdu'l-Bahá and very dear to His heart.

Encouraging as these steps are, they do not take care of the main body of the work--the establishment of new Assemblies and groups. In order to accomplish this the entire Canadian Community will have to rise to a new level of activity, consciousness, and sacrifice, just as did the British Bahá'í Community during their Six Year Plan. Their success is perhaps one of the most remarkable ever achieved in the Bahá'í World because they were few in number, run down in health from the long years of suffering during the war, and poor in financial resources. Their determination, dedication and moral stamina, however, carried them through, and Bahá'u'lláh gave them the victory. He will give the same victory to everyone who shows the same characteristics. Success breeds success, and this same Community, now rightfully proud and conscious of its importance, is carrying on its African work in a brilliant manner. The Canadian Bahá'ís, more prosperous, less restricted, and equally capable, can accomplish just as much if they unitedly determine to do so.

The response made by the Canadian friends to the Guardian's appeal for support of the Shrine work has touched him very much. He wishes to thank all those who contributed for their loving generosity, and to assure them that their cooperation in this wonderful task has added to the spiritual beauty of an Edifice already so Holy and so beloved by all the believers the world over.

He wishes you all every success in the discharge of your arduous duties, and is praying for a marked quickening in the pace of the Five Year Plan.

With Bahá'í love,

R. RABBANI.

***1** Jameson Bond--first pioneer to the Canadian Arctic (District of Keewatin 1950, District of Franklin 1951-63, with Mrs. Gale Bond from 1953 on).*

***2** Palle Bischoff--Danish believer, the first pioneer to Greenland (1951-54).*

Comments

January 25. On this date in 2019, the board of directors of the Baha'i International Development Organization held its first meeting.

Original file: 0265.html (position #34)

January 25. On this date in 2019, the board of directors of the Baha'i International Development Organization held its first meeting. "Regarding the new institution's mandate, the House of Justice writes that its 'primary purpose will be to facilitate learning about development by fostering and supporting action, reflection on action, study, consultation, the gathering and systematization of experience, conceptualization, and training—all carried out in the light of the Teachings of the Faith.'"

> *BAHA'I WORLD CENTRE — The board of directors of the Baha'i International Development Organization has convened for the first time. The establishment of the new institution was announced by the Universal House of Justice in its 9 November message to the Baha'is of the World.*
>
> *A five-member board of directors, appointed in November for a five-year term, met at the Baha'i World Centre and began consulting on the Development Organization's aims and work.*
>
> *Regarding the new institution's mandate, the House of Justice writes that its "primary purpose will be to facilitate learning about development by fostering and supporting action, reflection on action, study, consultation, the gathering and systematization of experience, conceptualization, and training—all carried out in*

the light of the Teachings of the Faith."

Rapid advances in Baha'i communities have helped make possible the establishment of the Development Organization, representing a new stage in the work of social and economic development in the Baha'i world.

Since the Faith's early years, Baha'is have striven to apply Baha'u'llah's teachings to improve the material and spiritual aspects of their societies. In 1983, the House of Justice created the Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) to assist it in promoting and coordinating the Baha'i community's social and economic development efforts. OSED has now evolved into the Baha'i International Development Organization.

Over 35 years, Baha'i endeavors in this field have strengthened markedly, and a framework for social action has taken shape. Worldwide, there are scores of nongovernmental Baha'i-inspired social and economic development organizations as well as tens of thousands of development activities and projects undertaken by Baha'is and other collaborators. These efforts fall along a spectrum of complexity and address an array of challenges in areas related to education, literacy, health, the environment, support for refugees, the advancement of women, empowerment of junior youth, elimination of racial prejudice, agriculture, local economies, and village development. The Development Organization will carry forward this work on an expanding scale and at higher levels of complexity.

The board of directors will draw on the newly inaugurated Baha'i Development Fund, to which Baha'is may contribute, to assist both long-standing and emerging development efforts worldwide.

The 9 November message announcing the Development Organization's establishment coincided with the 199th anniversary of the birth of the Bab. The House of Justice announced the establishment of OSED 35 years earlier, also on the anniversary of the Bab's birth.

Comments

January 25. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There are practically no technical teachings on economics in the Cause, such as banking, the price system, and others. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a few basic principles which should guide future Bahá'í economists..."

Original file: 0264.html (position #33)

January 25. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "There are practically no technical teachings on economics in the Cause, such as banking, the price system, and others. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a few basic principles which should guide future Bahá'í economists..."

> *There are practically no technical teachings on economics in the Cause, such as banking, the price system, and others. The Cause is not an economic system, nor its Founders be considered as having been technical economists. ...The contribution of the Faith to this subject is essentially indirect, as it consists of the*

> *application of spiritual principles to our present-day economic system. Bahá'u'lláh has given us a few basic principles which should guide future Bahá'í economists in establishing such institutions which will adjust the economic relationships of the world...*
>
> *(Shoghi Effendi, letter dated 25 January 1936)*

Comments

January 25. On this date in 2005, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the members of the International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu’lláh prior to their inaugural meeting.

Original file: 0263.html (position #32)

January 25. On this date in 2005, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the members of the International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu’lláh prior to their inaugural meeting. It is notable that in 2007, two years after this letter, the Italian Bahá'í community was rocked by a scandal in which the General Secretary of the NSA, Franco Ceccherini, was formally charged by the Italian government for embezzlement and fraud in the amount of 360,000 Euros.

> *101. "With the approach of the meeting ..., which will mark your inaugural..." With the approach of the meeting ..., which will mark your inaugural meeting as members of the International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu’lláh, we have decided that it is now appropriate to provide you with guidance about your work and the development of Huqúqu’lláh, the Right of God, in the years ahead.*
>
> *As stated in our letter ..., notifying you of your appointment, your duties are those of the trusteeship of Huqúqu’lláh, following in the path of the Chief Trustee of Huqúqu’lláh, the Hand of the Cause Dr. ‘Alí-Muhammad Varqá....*

A major element of the duties to be undertaken by the Deputies and Representatives throughout the world will continue to be the education of believers in the Right of God. The required education should be accomplished in a moderate and patient manner, so that the hearts of the believers are attracted to obedience to the provisions of the law of Huqúqu'lláh as part of their yearning to pursue the path of spiritual development prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh. The most important features of the law should be presented in as simple a form as possible, to avoid the dear friends obligated to pay Huqúqu'lláh from becoming inhibited about doing so by an unwarranted fear of its complexity of application.

Under all conditions, due attention should be given to preserving the dignity of the Faith....

We ask you to propose ... details for a network of National or Regional Boards embracing the entire worldwide community and to recommend the membership of these Boards. In countries where there are a substantial number of believers obligated to pay Huqúqu'lláh, a National Board is appropriate. Regional Boards should be set up to cover other groups of countries, with the expectation that each Regional Board will be replaced by a number of National Boards in the future, as the Bahá'í community grows.

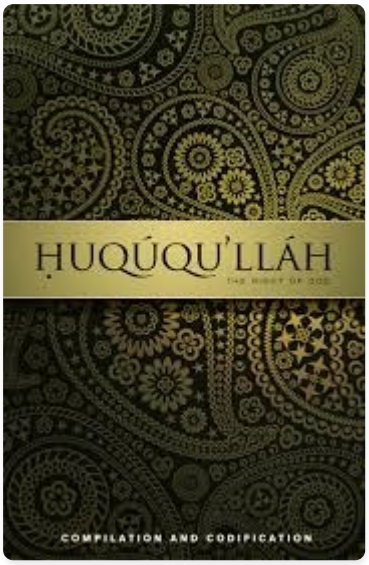
The members of these Boards will be appointed to serve for a term of three years and will be eligible for reappointment. No specific date is set for the appointment, so that a replacement can be approved whenever a Deputy is unable to discharge the functions. We have decided that Counsellors should not be eligible for membership to these Boards.

The Regional and National Boards would have the function of appointing Representatives, for a term of three years; as in the case of Deputies, when a Representative is appointed to replace an existing member unable to carry out the functions, the new appointee will serve for a full three years.

To the extent possible the Representatives will not be required to receive and transmit funds or to issue receipts.... This modification in the functions of the Representatives means that their work will be educational....

(25 January 2005, written by the Universal House of Justice to the members of the International Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh)

It is notable that in 2007, two years after this letter, the Italian Bahá'í community was rocked by a scandal in which the General Secretary of the NSA, Franco Ceccherini, was formally charged by the Italian government for embezzlement and fraud in the amount of 360,000 Euros.



Comments

January 25. On this date in 2001, the Ontario Human Rights Commission asked to investigate a case of alleged discrimination "Dr. Benjamin Todd Lawson believes he was denied a permanent tenured position with the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies because he's a member of the Baha'i faith.

Original file: 0262.html (position #31)

January 25. On this date in 2001, the Ontario Human Rights Commission asked its Board of Inquiry to investigate a case of alleged discrimination against the University of Toronto. "Dr. Benjamin Todd Lawson believes he was denied a permanent tenured position with the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies because he's a member of the Baha'i faith."

> *Ontario Human Rights Commission to investigate discrimination case against U of*

T

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has asked the Board of Inquiry to investigate a case of alleged discrimination involving a former contract professor at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Benjamin Todd Lawson believes he was denied a permanent tenured position with the Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies because he's a member of the Baha'i faith.

His lawyer says he was passed over for two positions at the university in the early 1990s, even though he met the qualifications.

The university says it did not discriminate against Lawson.

Lawson says he feels vindicated by the commission's decision to appoint a board of inquiry.

Comments

January 26. On this date in 2000, Adib Teherzadeh, a member of the UHJ since 1988, died. He was previously a member of the NSA of the British Isles from 1960 to 1971 and later of the NSA of the Republic of Ireland from 1972 to 1976, when he was appointed a Counsellor for Europe.

Original file: 0261.html (position #30)

January 26. On this date in 2000, Adib Taherzadeh, a member of the UHJ since 1988, died. He was previously a member of the NSA of the British Isles from 1960 to 1971 and later of the NSA of the Republic of Ireland from 1972 to 1976, when he was appointed a Counsellor for Europe.

Adib Taherzadeh was born on April 29, 1921, in Yazd, Iran, into a family who had a strong association with the Bahá'í Faith since its inception. He studied electrical engineering at the University of Tehran, and then moved to Coventry, England in 1948 and pursued advanced studies. He moved to Ireland in 1950 working as the chief engineer of an industrial concern until 1988. He married twice, first to Zarin Moosezadeh Cohen with

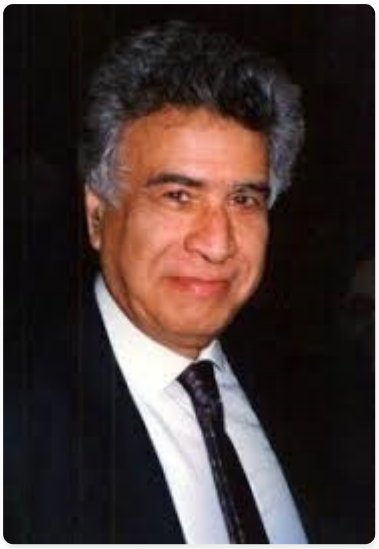
whom he had two children, a son Tahir Ronald and a daughter Bahiyyeh Vida. He married Belfast-born Lesley Gibson in the 1970s, and they had two children, a daughter Maryam (Baskin) and a son Bahhaj. At the time of his death, he had several grandchildren.

Taherzadeh served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the British Isles from 1960 to 1971. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Republic of Ireland when it was formed in 1972 and was appointed in 1976 to the European Continental Board of Counsellors. He was elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1988. A prolific writer and gifted public speaker, Taherzadeh wrote several books on the Bahá'í history and teachings, including *The Child of the Covenant*, *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*, and the four volume *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*.

His career is typical for individuals in the Bahá'í hierarchy, whether in an elected office or in an appointed offce from which the higher elected officials invariably come from.

At all levels, including the LSAs, Bahá'í leaders generally as if not more authoritarian than clergy from other religious faiths, which as Dale Husband points out, is one of the Four Ways to Create a Religion of Hypocrites:

> 1. *State that religion no longer needs clergy.....and replace them with leaders that are as authoritarian as the clergy ever was.*
> 2. *Claim that men and women should be equal.....but then deny women membership in the all-powerful leadership council of the religion.*
> 3. *Condemn as heretics those who believe in your religion but dare to challenge the claims of your religion's current leadership, while at the same time claiming to welcome as friends the followers of other religions.*
> 4. *Claim there is harmony between science and religion, but also claim that anything your leaders say is absolutely true, even if on topics science is expected to address.*
>
> *Any one of these makes a religion not worth following, but what do you do if you find a religion that has all four such contradictions*



Comments

January 26. On this date in 1949, Denis MacEoin was born. A former Bahá'í who was active from about 1966 to about 1980, he departed after clashes with the Bahá'í administration mostly due to his research works on Babism. He is a pro-Israel activist in Britain who writes for the Jerusalem Post.

Original file: 0260.html (position #29)

January 26. On this date in 1949, Denis MacEoin was born. A former Bahá'í who was active from about 1966 to about 1980, he left the religion after clashes with the Bahá'í administration mostly due to his research works on Babism. He is a pro-Israel activist in Britain who writes for *The Jerusalem Post* and is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute.

Denis MacEoin is a former Bahá'í who was active from about 1966 to about 1980, lecturing

at Bahá'í conferences and summer schools and writing in support of his religion. He left the religion after clashes with the Bahá'í administration mostly due to his research works on Babism. He is a pro-Israel activist in Britain who says he has "very negative feelings" about Islam. He writes for *The Jerusalem Post* and is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute.

From his profile page at *The Jerusalem Post*...

> *Denis MacEoin*
>
> *Danis [sic] MacEoin is a former lecturer of Arabic/Islamic Studies, the former editor the Middle East Quarterly, and is currently a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute. MacEoin authored several books and reports on Islam, the Middle East, and Israel including 'Dear Gary, Why You're Wrong about Israel', and blog 'A Liberal Defence of Israel.MacEoin is an active supporter of Israel in the UK.*

From his profile page at the Gatestone Institute...

> *Denis MacEoin*
>
> *Distinguished Senior Fellow, Gatestone Institute*
>
> *Denis MacEoin is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute. He first graduated with a B.A. and an M.A. in English Language and Literature from Trinity College, Dublin, followed by a second 4-year M.A. in Persian, Arabic, and Islamic Studies from Edinburgh and a PhD in Persian/Islamic Studies from Cambridge (King's College).*
>
> *He has lectured in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Newcastle University, and written several academic books and numerous articles, as well as many pieces of journalism. Recently, he has written reports on hate literature, Shari'a Law, and Islamic schools.*
>
> *He has worked as a writing tutor as the Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Newcastle University, where he has also taught a short course in creative writing ('Writing in Genre'). He was for some years the editor of a US-based journal, The Middle East*

> *Quarterly. In 1992, HarperCollins published a volume of his journalism under the title New Jerusalems: Islam, Religious Fundamentalism, and the Rushdie Affair.*

In 2003, Juan Cole described in a message on the Talisman mail list the pressure placed on Denis MacEoin by the Bahá'í Administrative Order...

> *Denis MacEoin did not withdraw from the faith, he was chased out by powerful Baha'i fundamentalists who were deeply threatened by the implications of his historical work. Denis became a Baha'i in North Ireland around 1965 and quickly emerged as a Baha'i youth leader. He was chosen to come to Haifa to commemorate the 1968 anniversary of Baha'u'llah's Letters to the Kings.*
>
> *He then wrote the House saying he did not know whether to serve the Faith by becoming an academic scholar of the Middle East or by going pioneering. They wrote back that either path would be praiseworthy. (They later stabbed him in the back about this). He therefore entered graduate school at Edinburgh in Middle East Studies, then went on to Cambridge University for his Ph.D. He was the first academic to study the Babi movement with all the tools of modern scholarship, and his findings were groundbreaking.*
>
> *Denis made the mistake of continuing to be an active Baha'i. Since the community is so heavily dominated by aggressive fundamentalist fanatics, if a genuine academic wants to be a Baha'i s/he has to keep a low profile. Denis did not. He gave summer school talks. He was once viciously attacked by Abu al-Qasim Faizi. His new ideas were upsetting the conservative British community. He objected when the Baha'i authorities supported dictators like Pinochet and Bokassa. He corresponded with the Los Angeles Study Class and some of his letters were published in their newsletter (a newsletter that the Baha'i authorities later closed down, for all the world like Tehran ayatollahs pulling a publishing license).*
>
> *Around 1980, fundamentalist UHJ members Ian Semple and David Hoffman called Denis to a meeting and told him he would have to fall silent (rather as the Vatican did to Leonardo Boff). Hoffman was especially harsh. Denis declined to fall silent, and ultimately withdrew from the Faith. He was pushed out by anti-intellectual bigots who had risen high in the Baha'ihierarchy and become Infallible. Denis's works on the Babi and Baha'i movements are some of the few pieces of solid scholarship that exist.*

> *Instead of being grateful to him for sacrificing all those years living in penury as a graduate student, studying Arabic and Persian, traveling to a dangerous Middle East, all for the service of Baha'u'llah, the community could think of nothing better to do than viciously attack him and throw him in the gutter of infamy.*
>
> *Denis's story is the story of most thinking people who have anything serious to do with the Baha'i faith. Either they adopt a cult-like mindset of true believers and covenant breakers, in which case they gradually cease being thinking persons, or they get chased out by the wild-eyed. A few people manage to avoid either fate by not drawing attention to themselves. The Baha'i Extreme Orthodox are like the Borg in Star Trek. They want to assimilate you, but might leave you alone if you stay quiet.*
>
> *cheers*
>
> *Juan Cole*
>
> *https://www.juancole.com/*

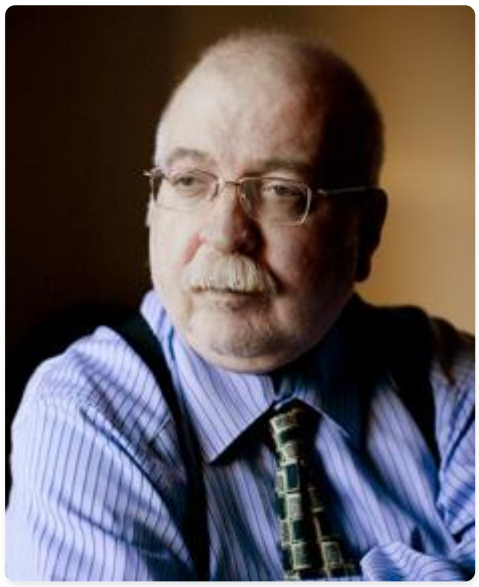
Juan Cole would continue on subsequent posts...

> *He wasn't saying anything polemic. He was just discovering who the Babis really were from solid historical sources. The powerful Baha'is, who have all the open-mindedness of Wahhabis, did not like it. It did not look like the fireside talks everyone grew up with, so they shoved Denis out of the community with threats of sanctions echoing about his ears.*
>
> *cheers Juan*

and later...

> *Denis's works were mostly published in Middle East or Religion journals or as academic books, and most could be gotten on interlibrary loan. There may be some things at www.bahai-library.org, and there certainly is a bibliography there.*

> *I apologize that I am off to a conference, so cannot go into depth but there are others here who can discuss Denis's findings.*
>
> *As to why they should have angered anyone, I suppose you'd have to pass them by a Baha'i fundamentalist and they would tell you. You could just ask about MacEoin at e.g. soc.religion.bahai or about his ideas on Babis. Or at beliefnet. I presume you will get an earful. One of them once more or less threatened to cut my head off with a sword, so they can be an irritable bunch.*
>
> *cheers Juan*
>
> *https://www.juancole.com/*



Comments

January 26. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote Kaukab H. A. MacCutcheon, answering a list of questions addressing such topics as Guardian Angels, "Approximately six thousand years elapsed since the appearance of Adam," and "The provision in the 'Aqdas' regarding the use of glass coffins."

Original file: 0259.html (position #28)

January 26. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote Kaukab H. A. MacCutcheon, answering a list of questions addressing such topics as Guardian Angels, "Approximately six thousand years elapsed since the appearance of Adam," and "The provision in the 'Aqdas' regarding the use of glass coffins."

EXTRACTS PROM SHOGHI EFFENDI'S LETTERS

circulated by RUTH J. MOFFETT

-Extracts from a letter from Shoghi Effendi to Kaukab H. A. MacCutcheon, dated January 26, 1939.

"In regard to the list of questions you had enclosed, the Guardian has directed me to answer them in the order in which they have been put:

1. *The Teachings do not contain any explanation of what is meant by Guardian Angel.*

2. *The holding of a memorial forty days after the passing of a person is a purely Islamic practice, and consequently should be discarded by the believers.*

3. *There is no prophecy in the writings of Baha'u'llah regarding the Pyramids.*

4. *On page 231 of the 'Gleanings' the passage beginning with the words, 'Out of earth have We created you' - - in this passage Baha'u'llah is refuting the argument of the Muslims who believe in bodily resurrection.*

5. *There is no connection between the birth of Christ and His having practiced celibacy to permit one to infer that since He was born of the Holy Spirit He therefore refused to marry. Even if Christ had been, married, this would in no way have affected the manner of the appearance of Muhammad or the Bab.*

6. *Approximately six thousand years elapsed since the appearance of Adam. The ages of the Prophets as spécified in the Bible were based on a different calculation than the one used at present. The years mentioned in the Bible were different from ours.*

7. *As to your question as to whether another letter will be added to our alphabet in order to have 27 letters; this tradition in which reference to 27 letters is made, has no relation to the Western alphabet.*

8. *The fulfilment of the prophecy regarding the appearance of the Sun in the West refers to the Baha'i Civilization and World Order, and has no relation to Abdu'l Baha's visit to the West;*

9. *The provision in the 'Aqdas' regarding the use of glass coffins will be explained when that Most Holy Book is published. This has no connection with the purification of the earth in the Day of Baha'u'llah.*

10. *The words Spirit and Soul are interchangeable. You should refer to 'Answered Questions' for further clarification.*

11. *The subconscious mind is one of the manifestations of the human soul.*

12. *The Bab is the return of the 12th Immam only in a spiritual sense, just as Baha'u'llah is the return of the Spirit, the Christ.*

13. *In the 'Gleanings', p. 154, the sentence beginning with 'a sick person showeth Baha'u'llah means by this that the soul itself, in its reality, is not affected by any physical forces.*

14. *There is no reference in the teachings of the real birthday of Jesus Christ.*

15. *Also, the Teachings hear no reference to the names of the stars which are supposed to have preceded Moses, Christ and other Divine Prophets.*

16. *The Jews are the descendants of Jacob. Both they and the Arabs are branches of the Semitic race."*

Your true and grateful brother,

SHOGHI.

Comments

January 26. On this date in 1958, during the Kampala International Conference, the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of Africa (which was designed by Charles Mason Remey) was laid. Ruhiyyih Khanum gave a tribute to Shoghi Effendi, who had died shortly before the Kampala International Conference.

Original file: 0258.html (position #27)

January 26. On this date in 1958, during the Kampala International Conference, the cornerstone of the Mother Temple of Africa (which was designed by Charles Mason Remey) was laid. Ruhiyyih Khanum gave a tribute to Shoghi Effendi, who had died shortly before the Kampala International Conference.

Comments

January 27. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice received a letter regarding the promotion of world peace, in anticipation of the Lesser Peace which was to be established prior to the year 2000.

Original file: 0257.html (position #26)

January 27. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice received a letter regarding the promotion of world peace, in anticipation of the Lesser Peace which was to be established prior to the year 2000.

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*
>
> *10 March 1987*
>
> *[To an individual]*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friend,*
>
> *The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 27 January 1987 and has asked us to convey on its behalf the following in response to the points you*

have raised.

It is not advisable for Bahá'í institutions or individuals to initiate actions designed to prod government leaders to urge their government or the leaders of other governments to convene the world conference called for by Bahá'u'lláh and echoed in The Promise of World Peace. *Two points should be borne in mind in this regard: (1) Because of the political gravity of the decisions implied by this call and the differing political attitudes which it evokes, such actions on the part of the Bahá'í community would embroil the friends in partisan politics. There is quite a difference between identifying, as does the* Peace Statement, *the need for a convocation of world leaders and initiating the political processes towards its realization. (2) In the writings of the Faith (e.g., the closing passages of* The Promised Day Is Come*), it is clear that the establishment of the* Lesser Peace, *of which the conference of leaders will be a related event, will come about independently of any Bahá'í plan or action. This is not to say that Bahá'ís should be inert. Indeed, Bahá'ís may promote the concept of the* Lesser Peace *with all that it implies without engaging in the political processes which its realization will require.*

The House of Justice feels that the task before the Bahá'ís is to prepare the ground for the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of world government. This requires a number of related activities which have been indicated in the goals of previous and present Plans *of the community based on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's* Tablets of the Divine Plan. *The activities which will indirectly prepare the world to make the final stride include the following.*

The establishment as rapidly as possible of firmly grounded, efficiently functioning Local Spiritual Assemblies in every part of the world, so that seekers everywhere will have a point of reference to which they can turn for guidance and for the Teachings of the Faith. This implies a vast increase in Bahá'í membership. Although the Canadian and many other Bahá'í Communities have achieved remarkable progress, much work is required to bring the Bahá'í institutions all over the world to the degree of maturation that is needed.

A second important activity is the deepening of the believers, of all ages, in their understanding of and obedience to the Teachings of the Faith. A third is the proclamation of the Faith to all strata of society, and in particular to those in authority and to leaders of thought so that those who hold the direction of peoples in their hands will learn accurately about the nature and tenets of the Faith and

will grow to respect it and implement its principles. A fourth is the promotion of Bahá'í scholarship, so that an increasing number of believers will be able to analyze the problems of mankind in every field and to show how the Teachings solve them. A fifth is the development of relations between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations, both directly with the highest United Nations institutions and at a grass-roots level in areas of rural development, education, etc.

These different activities, which began a long time ago and are still going on, coupled with the presentation of The Promise of World Peace to the leaders of the world, will gradually bring about circumstances which will indicate the direction of subsequent actions. The House of Justice will advise the Bahá'í world when the time is ripe for such actions. The unpredictability of certain events in the world, which are likely to change the current course of certain processes, makes it impracticable for the House of Justice to respond with precision to some of your questions.

The House of Justice in its message to the Bahá'ís of the World dated 2 January 1986 referred to Shoghi Effendi's perception of a dialectic of victory and crisis in the organic life of the Cause. This indicates the instrumentality of the forces of opposition which will help to bring about, over a period of time, conditions necessary for the Local and National Spiritual Assemblies to act effectively as Local and National Houses of Justice.

The stages of the evolution of these institutions, which will synchronize with the establishment of the Lesser Peace, are indicated in the writings of the beloved Guardian, such as in the following extract:

> *Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.*
>
> *(The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 6–7)*

Your specific question about whether or not Bahá'ís in North America "are permitted to run for election to school boards, town or municipal councils, hospital

boards and for local enforcement officer positions" should be answered by the National Assemblies concerned.

The completion of the buildings on the Arc "which will synchronize with two no less significant developments—the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions—the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world" speaks, as you have rightly perceived, "to the readiness of the Bahá'í Administrative Order to manage the ever-growing and complex affairs of the Cause as well as an increased capacity to interface with the non-Bahá'í world and its institutions."

Regarding the question in the final paragraph of your letter, the following reply was written on behalf of the beloved Guardian in a letter dated 14 March 1939 to an individual believer.

> *Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Super State—your view on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in the "Unfoldment of World Civilization."*

The fact that the Bahá'í institutions will not be directly involved in the eventual convocation of world leaders and in effecting the political unity of nations does not mean that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of mankind. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are constantly engaged in laying the groundwork for a permanent peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

January 27. On this date in 2017, Fred Schechter died. Named a Knight of Baha'u'llah for French Somaliland, he also travelled as a pioneer to several countries in Latin America and served thirteen years as a Continental Counsellor in the Americas and served on the International Teaching Centre.

Original file: 0256.html (position #25)

January 27. On this date in 2017, Fred Schechter died in Orange County, California. Named a Knight of Baha'u'llah for French Somaliland. he also travelled as a pioneer to several countries in Latin America and served thirteen years as a Continental Counsellor in the Americas and served on the International Teaching Centre from 1993 to 1998.

Born in 1927 to a Jewish family in Brooklyn, New York, Fred Schechter served in the Navy then attended Syracuse University. A comparative religion course provided his first serious

look at the Bahá'í Faith, and he became a believer in spring 1949. He soon focused his studies on library science and administration after being advised such a degree could help him find work in many parts of the world. By the time he earned a master's degree in 1952 he was serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly and a regional teaching committee, and exploring the possibility of international pioneering.

He first went to Kenya to help fulfill the Two Year Plan assigned to the British Bahá'í community. A few months later Shoghi Effendi asked the Bahá'ís to disperse to meet goals of the Ten Year Crusade of 1953–1963, so in October 1953 Fred arrived in French Somaliland. He was one of three honored by Shoghi Effendi as Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for their roles in opening that territory to the Faith. Lack of employment kept that stay brief, and his job search took him to Ethiopia before he landed in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1954. A year later Fred made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he conversed with the Guardian.

Continuing to respond to the needs of the Bahá'í community's development, in 1957 he accepted an invitation by William Sears, then an Auxiliary Board member and later a Hand of the Cause, to move to his family's farm near Johannesburg. Based there, he helped to teach the Faith and to prepare for election of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa, established only a year earlier.

Soon the goals of the Crusade were met in Africa. But the needs were still acute in South America, so Fred, along with Bill Sears Jr., traveled to Uruguay. During a campaign to strengthen the Bahá'í community there, Fred met his life partner, fellow Bahá'í Julia Bulling, and they married in her home country of Chile in 1960. Bill Sears Jr. married Julia's sister Mariel. Months passed before Fred and Julia settled down; to meet Bahá'í community needs they traveled to the Dominican Republic and then to Ecuador, where their first son was born. It emerged that Uruguay was where they were needed most, so they returned to live there through 1965, welcoming a second son. Fred and Julia were members of Uruguay's National Spiritual Assembly, with Fred serving as secretary.

Economic conditions caused them to move to the United States, and their daughter was born there. Living for many years in La Mesa, California, Fred continued to teach and support the Faith energetically, serving the region as a member of a teaching committee and later as an Auxiliary Board member. He was elected several times as a delegate to the Bahá'í National Convention. In 1980 he began 13 years' service as a member of the Continental Board of Counselors for the Americas. He retired in 1990 from the administration of the San Diego Public Library System. In 1993 he was called to the Bahá'í World Center to serve as a Counselor member of the International Teaching Center,

returning to California in 1998.

For years Fred offered courses at Bosch and Louhelen Bahá'í Schools, the Southern California summer school and other gatherings, speaking on Bahá'í history, the Guardian and the Hands of the Cause, the worldwide Plans, and other topics.

Fred's wife, Julia Bulling Schechter, preceded him in death. His survivors include their three children, Charles, Jim and Amy; and eight grandchildren.

Comments

January 27. On this date in 1920, Jospeh Hannen died. An early American Bahá'í who was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi, he was an integral member of the Washington Bahá'í community, served on Bahá’í Temple Unity, and took notes of many of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's talks.

Original file: 0255.html (position #24)

January 27. On this date in 1920, Jospeh Hannen died. An early American Bahá'í who was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi, he was an integral member of the Washington Bahá'í community, served on Bahá’í Temple Unity, and took notes of many of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's talks which were later published in *Promulgation of Universal Peace*.

Joseph Henry Hannen was an early American Bahá'í who was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi. He was an integral member of the Washington Bahá'í community

and was notable for his efforts to teach the Faith to the African American community.

In June 1902 Joseph resigned from his position with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad and moved from Norfolk, Virginia, to Washington, D.C. where he aimed to work in the mercantile business. He and his wife, Pauline, became Bahá'ís in Washington in 1902 and were deepened on the Covenant by Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl shortly after they accepted the Faith.

The Hannens introduced Louis Gregory to the Bahá'í Faith in Washington, D.C. in 1908. They went on Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and met 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1909. Joseph was elected to the Bahá'í Temple Unity for the first time in 1910 and served for one year, he was re-elected to the body in 1915 and served for two years. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the United States in 1912 Joseph took notes of many of his talks, which were later published in *Promulgation of Universal Peace*.

He was struck by a car while crossing the street in January 1920, and was taken to hospital, but allowed to be taken home where he died five days after the accident. He was buried with a Bahá'í service in Prospect Hill Cemetery. At his request he had both black and white pall-bearers at the funeral.

'Abdu'l-Bahá sent a *Tablet to Pauline* following Joseph Hannen's death which included the following passage about him...

> *Thou knowest the magnitude of my sorrow as I engage in this following supplication. The favored servant of the Kingdom, Mr. Hannen, that pure and spotless soul, was the first self-sacrificing person in the path of the Merciful One. At night he was restless and during the day he was untiring. Not a moment did he rest and all his lifetime was consecrated to the service of the Kingdom. In the assemblage of Thy friends he was an active member and in the gathering of Thy favored ones an enkindled torch. In the horizon of guidance he twinkled like a radiant star and in the Abha Paradise he appeared a magnificent palm. He was an illumined soul, merciful, kingly, lordly.*

One of the talks that Joseph Henry Hannen took notes on was the November 8, 1912, talk 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave at the Washington Hebrew Congregation where he stated...

"Bahá'u'lláh was the glory of reality. This is not simply an assertion; it will be proved."

"Were it not for Jesus Christ, would the Bible, the Torah have reached this land of

America? Would the name of Moses be spread throughout the world? Refer to history."

Throughout the length and breadth of Persia there was not a single volume of the Old Testament until the religion of Jesus Christ caused it to appear everywhere so that today the Holy Bible is a household book in that country."

> *Talk given 8 November 1912*
>
> *Talk at Eighth Street Temple, Synagogue*
>
> *Washington, D. C.*
>
> *Notes by Joseph H. Hannen*
>
> *God is one, the effulgence of God is one, and humanity constitutes the servants of that one God. God is kind to all. He creates and provides for all, and all are under His care and protection. The Sun of Truth, the Word of God, shines upon all mankind; the divine cloud pours down its precious rain; the gentle zephyrs of His mercy blow, and all humanity is submerged in the ocean of His eternal justice and loving-kindness. God has created mankind from the same progeny in order that they may associate in good fellowship, exercise love toward each other and live together in unity and brotherhood.*
>
> *But we have acted contrary to the will and good pleasure of God. We have been the cause of enmity and disunion. We have separated from each other and risen against each other in opposition and strife. How many have been the wars between peoples and nations! What bloodshed! Numberless are the cities and homes which have been laid waste. All of this has been contrary to the good pleasure of God, for He hath willed love for humanity. He is clement and merciful to all His creatures. He hath ordained amity and fellowship amongst men.*
>
> *Most regrettable of all is the state of difference and divergence we have created between each other in the name of religion, imagining that a paramount duty in our religious belief is that of alienation and estrangement, that we should shun each other and consider each other contaminated with error and infidelity. In reality, the foundations of the divine religions are one and the same. The differences which have arisen between us are due to blind imitations of dogmatic beliefs and adherence to ancestral forms of worship. Abraham was the founder of reality. Moses, Christ, Muhammad were the manifestations of reality.*

Bahá'u'lláh was the glory of reality. This is not simply an assertion; it will be proved.

Let me ask your closest attention in considering this subject. ***The divine religions embody two kinds of ordinances. First,*** *there are those which constitute essential, or spiritual, teachings of the Word of God. These are faith in God, the acquirement of the virtues which characterize perfect manhood, praiseworthy moralities, the acquisition of the bestowals and bounties emanating from the divine effulgences--in brief, the ordinances which concern the realm of morals and ethics. This is the fundamental aspect of the religion of God, and this is of the highest importance because knowledge of God is the fundamental requirement of man. Man must comprehend the oneness of Divinity. He must come to know and acknowledge the precepts of God and realize for a certainty that the ethical development of humanity is dependent upon religion. He must get rid of all defects and seek the attainment of heavenly virtues in order that he may prove to be the image and likeness of God. It is recorded in the Holy Bible that God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." It is self-evident that the image and likeness mentioned do not apply to the form and semblance of a human being because the reality of Divinity is not limited to any form or figure. Nay, rather, the attributes and characteristics of God are intended. Even as God is pronounced to be just, man must likewise be just. As God is loving and kind to all men, man must likewise manifest loving-kindness to all humanity. As God is loyal and truthful, man must show forth the same attributes in the human world. Even as God exercises mercy toward all, man must prove himself to be the manifestation of mercy. In a word, the image and likeness of God constitute the virtues of God, and man is intended to become the recipient of the effulgences of divine attributes. This is the essential foundation of all the divine religions, the reality itself, common to all. Abraham promulgated this; Moses proclaimed it. Christ and all the Prophets upheld this standard and aspect of divine religion.*

Second, *there are laws and ordinances which are temporary and nonessential. These concern human transactions and relations. They are accidental and subject to change according to the exigencies of time and place. These ordinances are neither permanent nor fundamental. For instance, during the time of Noah it was expedient that seafood be considered as lawful; therefore, God commanded Noah to partake of all marine animal life. During the time of Moses this was not in accordance with the exigencies of Israel's existence; therefore, a second command was revealed partly abrogating the law concerning marine foods. During the time*

of Abraham--upon Him be peace!--camel's milk was considered a lawful and acceptable food; likewise, the flesh of the camel; but during Jacob's time, because of a certain vow He made, this became unlawful. These are nonessential, temporary laws. In the Holy Bible there are certain commandments which according to those bygone times constituted the very spirit of the age, the very light of that period. For example, according to the law of the Torah if a man committed theft of a certain amount, they cut off his hand. Is it practicable and reasonable in this present day to cut off a man's hand for the theft of a dollar? In the Torah there are ten ordinances concerning murder. Could these be made effective today? Unquestionably no; times have changed. According to the explicit text of the Bible if a man should change or break the law of the Sabbath or if he should touch fire on the Sabbath, he must be killed. Today such a law is abrogated. The Torah declares that if a man should speak a disrespectful word to his father, he should suffer the penalty of death. Is this possible of enforcement now? No; human conditions have undergone changes. Likewise, during the time of Christ certain minor ordinances conformable to that period were enforced.

It has been shown conclusively, therefore, that the foundation of the religion of God remains permanent and unchanging. It is that fixed foundation which ensures the progress and stability of the body politic and the illumination of humanity. It has ever been the cause of love and justice amongst men. It works for the true fellowship and unification of all mankind, for it never changes and is not subject to supersedure. The accidental, or nonessential, laws which regulate the transactions of the social body and everyday affairs of life are changeable and subject to abrogation.

Let me ask: What is the purpose of Prophethood? Why has God sent the Prophets? It is self-evident that the Prophets are the Educators of men and the Teachers of the human race. They come to bestow universal education upon humanity, to give humanity training, to uplift the human race from the abyss of despair and desolation and to enable man to attain the apogee of advancement and glory. The people are in darkness; the Prophets bring them into the realm of light. They are in a state of utter imperfection; the Prophets imbue them with perfections. The purpose of the prophetic mission is none other than the education and guidance of the people. Therefore, we must regard and be on the lookout for the man who is thus qualified--that is to say, any soul who proves to be the Educator of mankind and the Teacher of the human race is undoubtedly the Prophet of His age.

For example, let us review the events connected with the history of Moses--upon Him be peace! He dwelt in Midian at a time when the children of Israel were in captivity and bondage in the land of Egypt, subjected to every tyranny and severe oppression. They were illiterate and ignorant, undergoing cruel ordeals and experiences. They were in such a state of helplessness and impotence that it was proverbial to state that one Egyptian could overcome ten Israelites. At such a time as this and under such forbidding conditions Moses appeared and shone forth with a heavenly radiance. He saved Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh and released them from captivity. He led them out of the land of Egypt and into the Holy Land. They had been scattered and broken; He unified and disciplined them, conferred upon them the blessing of wisdom and knowledge. They had been slaves; He made them princes. They were ignorant; He made them learned. They were imperfect; He enabled them to attain perfection. In a word, He led them out of their condition of hopelessness and brought them to efficiency in the plane of confidence and valor. They became renowned throughout the ancient world until finally in the zenith and splendor of their new civilization the glory of the sovereignty of Solomon was attained. Through the guidance and training of Moses these slaves and captives became the dominating people amongst the nations. Not only in physical and military superiority were they renowned, but in all the degrees of arts, letters and refinement their fame was widespread. Even the celebrated philosophers of Greece journeyed to Jerusalem in order to study with the Israelitish sages, and many were the lessons of philosophy and wisdom they received. Among these philosophers was the famous Socrates. He visited the Holy Land and studied with the prophets of Israel, acquiring principles of their philosophical teaching and a knowledge of their advanced arts and sciences. After his return to Greece he founded the system known as the unity of God. The Greek people rose against him, and at last he was poisoned in the presence of the king. Hippocrates and many other Greek philosophers sat at the feet of the learned Israelitish doctors and absorbed their expositions of wisdom and inner truth.

Inasmuch as Moses through the influence of His great mission was instrumental in releasing the Israelites from a low state of debasement and humiliation, establishing them in a station of prestige and glorification, disciplining and educating them, it is necessary for us to reach a fair and just judgment in regard to such a marvelous Teacher. For in this great accomplishment He stood single and alone. Could He have made such a change and brought about such a condition among these people without the sanction and assistance of a heavenly power?

Could He have transformed a people from humiliation to glory without a holy and divine support?

None other than a divine power could have done this. Therein lies the proof of Prophethood because the mission of a Prophet is education of the human race such as this Personage accomplished, proving Him to be a mighty Prophet among the Prophets and His Book the very Book of God. This is a rational, direct and perfect proof.

In brief, Moses--upon Whom be peace!--founded the law of God, purified the morals of the people of Israel and gave them an impetus toward nobler and higher attainments. But after the departure of Moses, following the decline of the glory of Solomon's era and during the reign of Jeroboam there came a great change in this nation. The high ethical standards and spiritual perfections ceased to exist. Conditions and morals became corrupt, religion was debased, and the perfect principles of the Mosaic law were obscured in superstition and polytheism. War and strife arose among the tribes, and their unity was destroyed. The followers of Jeroboam declared themselves rightful and valid in kingly succession, and the supporters of Rehoboam made the same claim. Finally, the tribes were torn asunder by hostility and hatred, the glory of Israel was eclipsed, and so complete was the degradation that a golden calf was set up as an object of worship in the city of Tyre. Thereupon God sent Elijah, the prophet, who redeemed the people, renewed the law of God and established an era of new life for Israel. History shows a still later change and transformation when this oneness and solidarity were followed by another dispersion of the tribes. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, invaded the Holy Land and carried away captive seventy thousand Israelites to Chaldea, where the greatest reverses, trials and suffering afflicted these unfortunate people. Then the prophets of God again reformed and reestablished the law of God, and the people in their humiliation again followed it. This resulted in their liberation, and under the edict of Cyrus, King of Persia, there was a return to the Holy City. Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon were rebuilt, and the glory of Israel was restored. This lasted but a short time; the morality of the people declined, and conditions reached an extreme degree until the Roman general Titus took Jerusalem and razed it to its foundations. Pillage and conquest completed the desolation; Palestine became a waste and wilderness, and the Jews fled from the Holy Land of their ancestors. The cause of this disintegration and dispersion was the departure of Israel from the foundation of the law of God revealed by Moses--namely, the acquisition of divine virtues, morality, love, the

development of arts and sciences and the spirit of the oneness of humanity.

I now wish you to examine certain facts and statements which are worthy of consideration. My purpose and intention is to remove from the hearts of men the religious enmity and hatred which have fettered them and to bring all religions into agreement and unity. Inasmuch as this hatred and enmity, this bigotry and intolerance are outcomes of misunderstandings, the reality of religious unity will appear when these misunderstandings are dispelled. For the foundation of the divine religions is one foundation. This is the oneness of revelation or teaching. But, alas, we have turned away from that foundation, holding tenaciously to various dogmatic forms and blind imitation of ancestral beliefs. This is the real cause of enmity, hatred and bloodshed in the world--the reason of alienation and estrangement among mankind. Therefore, I wish you to be very just and fair in your judgment of the following statements.

During the time that the people of Israel were being tossed and afflicted by the conditions I have named, Jesus Christ appeared among them. Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew. He was single and unaided, alone and unique. He had no assistant. The Jews at once pronounced Him to be an enemy of Moses. They declared that He was the destroyer of the Mosaic laws and ordinances. Let us examine the facts as they are, investigate the truth and reality in order to arrive at a true opinion and conclusion. For a completely fair opinion upon this question we must lay aside all we have and investigate independently. This Personage, Jesus Christ, declared Moses to have been the Prophet of God and pronounced all the prophets of Israel as sent from God. He proclaimed the Torah the very Book of God, summoned all to conform to its precepts and follow its teachings. It is an historical fact that during a period of fifteen hundred years the kings of Israel were unable to promulgate broadcast the religion of Judaism. In fact, during that period the name and history of Moses were confined to the boundaries of Palestine and the Torah was a book well known only in that country. ***But through Christ, through the blessing of the New Testament of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament, the Torah, was translated into six hundred different tongues and spread throughout the world. It was through Christianity that the Torah reached Persia. Before that time there was no knowledge in that country of such a book, but Christ caused its spread and acceptance.*** *Through Him the name of Moses was elevated and revered. He was instrumental in publishing the name and greatness of the Israelitish prophets, and He proved to the world that the Israelites constituted the people of God. Which of the kings of Israel could have*

accomplished this? ***Were it not for Jesus Christ, would the Bible, the Torah have reached this land of America? Would the name of Moses be spread throughout the world? Refer to history.*** *Everyone knows that when Christianity was spread, there was a simultaneous spread of the knowledge of Judaism and the Torah.* ***Throughout the length and breadth of Persia there was not a single volume of the Old Testament until the religion of Jesus Christ caused it to appear everywhere so that today the Holy Bible is a household book in that country.*** *It is evident, then, that Christ was a friend of Moses, that He loved and believed in Moses; otherwise, He would not have commemorated His name and Prophethood. This is self-evident. Therefore, Christians and Jews should have the greatest love for each other because the Founders of these two great religions have been in perfect agreement in Book and teaching. Their followers should be likewise.*

We have already stated the valid proofs of Prophethood. We find the very evidences of the validity of Moses were witnessed and duplicated in Christ. Christ was also a unique and single Personage born of the lineage of Israel. By the power of His Word He was able to unite people of the Roman, Greek, Chaldean, Egyptian and Assyrian nations. Whereas they had been cruel, bloodthirsty and hostile, killing, pillaging and taking each other captive, He cemented them together in a perfect bond of unity and love. He caused them to agree and become reconciled. Such mighty effects were the results of the manifestation of one single Soul. This proves conclusively that Christ was assisted by God. Today all Christians admit and believe that Moses was a Prophet of God. They declare that His Book was the Book of God, that the prophets of Israel were true and valid and that the people of Israel constituted the people of God. What harm has come from this? What harm could come from a statement by the Jews that Jesus was also a Manifestation of the Word of God? Have the Christians suffered for their belief in Moses? Have they experienced any loss of religious enthusiasm or witnessed any defeat in their religious belief by declaring that Moses was a Prophet of God, that the Torah was a Book of God and that all the prophets of Israel were prophets of God? It is evident that no loss comes from this. And now it is time for the Jews to declare that Christ was the Word of God, and then this enmity between two great religions will pass away. For two thousand years this enmity and religious prejudice have continued. Blood has been shed, ordeals have been suffered. These few words will remedy the difficulty and unite two great religions. What harm could follow this: that just as the Christians glorify and praise the name of Moses, likewise the Jews should commemorate the name of Christ, declare Him to be the Word of God and

consider Him as one of the chosen Messengers of God?

A few words concerning the Qur'án and the Muslims: *When Muhammad appeared, He spoke of Moses as the great Man of God. In the Qur'án He refers to the sayings of Moses in seven different places, proclaims Him a Prophet and the possessor of a Book, the Founder of the law and the Spirit of God. He said, "Whosoever believes in Him is acceptable in the estimation of God, and whosoever shuns Him or any of the prophets is rejected of God." Even in conclusion He calls upon His own relatives, saying, "Why have ye shunned and not believed in Moses? Why have ye not acknowledged the Torah? Why have ye not believed in the Jewish prophets?" In a certain surih of the Qur'án He mentions the names of twenty-eight of the prophets of Israel, praising each and all of them. To this great extent He has ratified and commended the prophets and religion of Israel. The purport is this: that Muhammad praised and glorified Moses and confirmed Judaism. He declared that whosoever denies Moses is contaminated and even if he repents, his repentance will not be accepted. He pronounced His own relatives infidels and impure because they had denied the prophets. He said, "Because you have not believed in Christ, because you have not believed in Moses, because you have not believed in the Gospels, you are infidels and contaminated." In this way Muhammad has praised the Torah, Moses, Christ and the prophets of the past. He appeared amongst the Arabs, who were a people nomadic and illiterate, barbarous in nature and bloodthirsty. He guided and trained them until they attained a high degree of development. Through His education and discipline they rose from the lowest levels of ignorance to the heights of knowledge, becoming masters of erudition and philosophy. We see, therefore that the proofs applicable to one Prophet are equally applicable to another.*

In conclusion, since the Prophets themselves, the Founders, have loved, praised and testified of each other, why should we disagree and be alienated? God is one. He is the Shepherd of all. We are His sheep and, therefore, should live together in love and unity. We should manifest the spirit of justness and goodwill toward each other. Shall we do this, or shall we censure and pronounce anathema, praising ourselves and condemning all others? What possible good can come from such attitude and action? On the contrary, nothing but enmity and hatred, injustice and inhumanity can possibly result. Has not this been the greatest cause of bloodshed, woe and tribulation in the past?

Praise be to God! You are living in a land of freedom. You are blessed with men of

learning, men who are well versed in the comparative study of religions. You realize the need of unity and know the great harm which comes from prejudice and superstition. I ask you, is not fellowship and brotherhood preferable to enmity and hatred in society and community? The answer is self-evident. Love and fellowship are absolutely needful to win the good pleasure of God, which is the goal of all human attainment. We must be united. We must love each other. We must ever praise each other. We must bestow commendation upon all people, thus removing the discord and hatred which have caused alienation amongst men. Otherwise, the conditions of the past will continue, praising ourselves and condemning others; religious wars will have no end, and religious prejudice, the prime cause of this havoc and tribulation, will increase. This must be abandoned, and the way to do it is to investigate the reality which underlies all the religions. This underlying reality is the love of humanity. For God is one and humanity is one, and the only creed of the Prophets is love and unity.

Comments

January 27. On this date in 2004, three medical experts wrote The Guardian newspaper that it is highly improbable that the primary cause of Dr. Kelly's death was hemorrhage from transection of a single ulnar artery, as stated by Brian Hutton in his report.

Original file: 0254.html (position #23)

January 27. On this date in 2004, three medical experts wrote *The Guardian* newspaper a letter stating that it is highly improbable that the primary cause of Dr. Kelly)'s death was hemorrhage from transection of a single ulnar artery, as stated by Brian Hutton in his report.

> *Our doubts about Dr Kelly's suicide*
>
> *As specialist medical professionals, we do not consider the evidence given at the Hutton inquiry has demonstrated that Dr David Kelly committed suicide.*

Dr Nicholas Hunt, the forensic pathologist at the Hutton inquiry, concluded that Dr Kelly bled to death from a self-inflicted wound to his left wrist. We view this as highly improbable. Arteries in the wrist are of matchstick thickness and severing them does not lead to life-threatening blood loss. Dr Hunt stated that the only artery that had been cut - the ulnar artery - had been completely transected. Complete transection causes the artery to quickly retract and close down, and this promotes clotting of the blood.

The ambulance team reported that the quantity of blood at the scene was minimal and surprisingly small. It is extremely difficult to lose significant amounts of blood at a pressure below 50-60 systolic in a subject who is compensating by vasoconstricting. To have died from haemorrhage, Dr Kelly would have had to lose about five pints of blood - it is unlikely that he would have lost more than a pint.

Alexander Allan, the forensic toxicologist at the inquiry, considered the amount ingested of Co-Proxamol insufficient to have caused death. Allan could not show that Dr Kelly had ingested the 29 tablets said to be missing from the packets found. Only a fifth of one tablet was found in his stomach. Although levels of Co-Proxamol in the blood were higher than therapeutic levels, Allan conceded that the blood level of each of the drug's two components was less than a third of what would normally be found in a fatal overdose.

We dispute that Dr Kelly could have died from haemorrhage or from Co-Proxamol ingestion or from both. The coroner, Nicholas Gardiner, has spoken recently of resuming the inquest into his death. If it re-opens, as in our opinion it should, a clear need exists to scrutinise more closely Dr Hunt's conclusions as to the cause of death.

David Halpin

Specialist in trauma and orthopaedic surgery ***C Stephen Frost***

Specialist in diagnostic radiology ***Searle Sennett***

Specialist in anaesthesiology *rowenathursby@onetel.net.uk*

Follow-up letter on February 11, 2004...

Medical evidence does not support suicide by Kelly

Since three of us wrote our letter to the Guardian on January 27, questioning whether Dr Kelly)'s death was suicide, we have received professional support for our view from vascular surgeon Martin Birnstingl, pathologist Dr Peter Fletcher, and consultant in public health Dr Andrew Rouse. We all agree that it is highly improbable that the primary cause of Dr Kelly's death was haemorrhage from transection of a single ulnar artery, as stated by Brian Hutton in his report. On February 10, Dr Rouse wrote to the BMJ explaining that he and his colleague, Yaser Adi, had spent 100 hours preparing a report, Hutton, Kelly and the Missing Epidemiology. They concluded that "the identified evidence does not support the view that wrist-slash deaths are common (or indeed possible)". While Professor Chris Milroy, in a letter to the BMJ, responded, "unlikely does not make it impossible", Dr Rouse replied: "Before most of us will be prepared to accept wristslashing ... as a satisfactory and credible explanation for a death, we will also require evidence that such aetiologies are likely; not merely 'possible'. "

Our criticism of the Hutton report is that its verdict of "suicide" is an inappropriate finding. To bleed to death from a transected artery goes against classical medical teaching, which is that a transected artery retracts, narrows, clots and stops bleeding within minutes. Even if a person continues to bleed, the body compensates for the loss of blood through vasoconstriction (closing down of non-essential arteries). This allows a partially exsanguinated individual to live for many hours, even days.

Professor Milroy expands on the finding of Dr Nicholas Hunt, the forensic pathologist at the Hutton inquiry - that haemorrhage was the main cause of death (possibly finding it inadequate) - and falls back on the toxicology: "The toxicology showed a significant overdose of co-proxamol. The standard text, Baselt, records deaths with concentrations at 1 mg/l, the concentration found in Kelly." But Dr Allan, the toxicogist in the case, considered this nowhere near toxic. Each of the two components was a third of what is normally considered a fatal level. Professor Milroy then talks of "ischaemic heart disease". But Dr Hunt is explicit that Dr Kelly did not suffer a heart attack. Thus, one must assume that no changes attributable to myocardial ischaemia were actually found at autopsy.

We believe the verdict given is in contradiction to medical teaching; is at variance with documented cases of wrist-slash suicides; and does not align itself with the

> *evidence presented at the inquiry. We call for the reopening of the inquest by the coroner, where a jury may be called and evidence taken on oath.*
>
> ***Andrew Rouse***
>
> *Public health consultant*
>
> ***Searle Sennett***
>
> *Specialist in anaesthesiology*
>
> ***David Halpin***
>
> *Specialist in trauma*
>
> ***Stephen Frost***
>
> *Specialist in radiology*
>
> ***Dr Peter Fletcher***
>
> *Specialist in pathology*
>
> ***Martin Birnstingl***
>
> *Specialist in vascular surgery*

On September 25, 1999, David Kelly converted to the Bahá'í Faith at the Bosch Bahá'í School in California. David Kelly was a prime source for the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

On August 11, 2003, the Independent carried an article about David Kelly, noting "In October 2002, Dr Kelly gave a slide show and lecture about his experiences as a weapons inspector in Iraq to a small almost private gathering of the Baha'i faith, which aims to unite the teachings of all the prophets. Dr Kelly had converted to the religion three years earlier, while in New York on attachment to the UN. When he returned to England he became treasurer of the small but influential Baha'i branch in Abingdon near his home. Roger Kingdon, a member, recalls: 'He had no doubt that [the Iraqis] had biological and chemical weapons. It was clear that David Kelly was largely happy with the material in the dossier.'"

On July 17, 2003, David Kelly was found dead from an apparent suicide, two days after appearing before a parliamentary Foreign Affairs Select Committee. An authority on biological warfare employed by the British Ministry of Defence, and formerly a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, David Kelly was a prime source for the false information of Iraq's purported possession of weapons of mass destruction in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

From *The Times* article titled "Faith, peace and tolerance in Monterey", dated September 3, 2003.

> *September 3*
>
> *Faith, peace and tolerance in Monterey*
>
> *By Chris Ayres and James Bone*
>
> *Four years ago David Kelly made a personal odyssey to the Californian resort of Monterey. He was there, not to visit its military installations or its tourist boutiques but to convert to the Baha'i faith*
>
> *IT WOULD SEEM an unlikely place to find peace for the soul. Monterey, an affluent city on California's central coast, about an hour's flight north from Los Angeles, is known more for its proximity to military installations and its role as retirement city of choice for generals and one-time spies than for any sense of spirituality. But it was to this beautiful seaside resort, often shrouded in mist because of the hot air from the Californian deserts hitting the cold Pacific, that David Kelly came four years ago to make a declaration of faith to the Baha'i religion.*
>
> *On September 25, 1999, he would have turned his back on the postcard landscape of sand dunes and gleaming ocean that marks California's Pacific Coast Highway, and taken the incongruously named Bonny Doon Road up through the towns of Loch Lomond and Bracken Brae, until he came to the first signpost to the Bosch Baha'i School, one of only four such establishments in the United States and an inspiration for the British scientist and biological weapons expert. He was possibly accompanied by his friend and spiritual mentor Mai Pederson, the American woman thought to be responsible for introducing him to the Baha'i faith.*
>
> *Monterey, with its proximity to the Defence Language Institute and other military*

installations, was a natural destination for Dr Kelly; the Monterey Institute of International Studies, which has its own Centre for Nonproliferation Studies, the largest non-governmental organisation in the world devoted to curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, would have been an essential place for him to visit. The centre is thought to have one of the largest databases of information on Saddam Hussein's regime in the world. The city itself, an old fishing town turned into a tourist mecca, with chi-chi boutiques and restaurants that line the seafront — a kind of Covent Garden-on-sea — is similar to other California coastal towns such as Carmel and Santa Barbara that look out over the rolling surf of the Pacific. But it is thought that Dr Kelly visited Monterey not for the expertise offered by the city's scientists, but for the consolation of the soul that he would find in the Baha'i school high above the city, overlooking the California coastline.

After reaching the series of wooden cabins that make up the school's campus — passing, first, the four garden gnomes, dressed in 19th-century peasant outfits, that wave cheerfully to those curious or devoted enough to go further — he made his simple declaration of faith. According to Joanne McClure, a youthful 66-year-old who pays $65 (£41) a night for room and board at the school, to an untrained eye this would have seemed an almost casual affair, the kind of non-ritual ritual beloved of the Baha'is, who pride themselves on having no formal initiation ceremony, sacrament or clergy. "First we would make sure initiates know who Baha'ullah is — the founder of the faith — and that they really knew what they were doing," says McClure. "Then they would sign a card saying that there are certain laws they need to obey." These include abstaining from drink, drugs and gambling; supporting the institution of marriage; believing that God created the universe; and encouraging the end of racial, class, and religious prejudices. After Dr Kelly had signed the card, it would have been sent to the Baha'i national headquarters in Wilmette, Illinois, where the new believer would be put on the mailing list for the American magazine The Baha'is. From then on, Dr Kelly would have been encouraged to attend feasts held every 19 days, which involve prayer-chants, administrative discussions with local spiritual assemblies, and general socialising.

Dr Kelly would have been attracted to the peacefulness and tolerance of the Baha'is, who believe that all religions are essentially valid. As McClure says: "I could never understand why God was going to send all these people to Hell just because they didn't believe in the same things." As a scientist, perhaps seeking spiritual succour within an intellectual framework, he would also have been

attracted to the faith's openness to modernity and its lack of fundamentalist dogma.

Throughout 1999 Dr Kelly travelled to New York for six or seven two-week trips to work with fellow experts at UN headquarters, and he visited at least twice more for the regular six-monthly meetings of the UN Special Commission's (UNSCOM's) college of commissioners. During this year, he often appeared at Baha'i meetings on the other side of the continent in Monterey, at the group's traditional 19th-day feasts. Pederson, who was studying at the Defence Language Institute, a heavily guarded military facility that taught American soldiers how to speak Japanese during the Second World War, was also at the feasts. The two had met and become friends when she served under the scientist on a UN mission to Iraq in 1998, the last inspection before the withdrawal of UN inspectors.

John VonBerg, whose wife was the secretary of the local Baha'is' spiritual assembly at the time, says: "He has been to my home several times. We had special events on holy days, representing various things. His principles were so close to those of the Baha'i faith."

The last time Dr Kelly visited, VonBerg remembers the Baha'i group going to gaze out over the bay.

Noreen Steinmetz, a friend of Dr Kelly and Pederson, recalls: "He would pass through here every once in a while and we would have the opportunity to sit down with him and go on hikes and chat. I met him through Mai Pederson." She adds that Dr Kelly always arrived at meetings by himself, and other Baha'is assumed that he was working at the nearby Monterey Institute, where several of his UN colleagues worked. But scientist friends at the centre say he never visited them there.

A glance around the Bosch Baha'i School's bookshop reveals some possible sources of tension for Dr Kelly. Several tomes focus on the divine importance of the UN, which was eventually ignored by the United States and Britain after it refused to support a military campaign to remove the Iraqi regime.

With that in mind, it is hard to see how Dr Kelly could ever have supported an Iraq war without UN approval.

Even more ominous, however, is a tract entitled Political Non-Involvement and Obedience to Government, compiled by Peter J. Khan. The book spells out the

Baha'is' belief that they should not become involved in any form of politics, because politics can create divisions that could destroy the Baha'i community.

As part of this argument, Baha'is believe that they should support their government, whether just or unjust (there are, however, exceptions). On page 28, Khan poses a question that Dr Kelly himself could have asked: What should we do when controversies arise as a result of government policies?

The answer, provided by the Guardian of the Baha'i faith, the late Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, is this: "In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that worldwide fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster."

Khan's book makes it clear that any Baha'i who does not follow this advice is ultimately weakening the Baha'i religion. Given this official position from the Guardian, it is not hard to imagine Dr Kelly's horror when he was named as the alleged source of a story blaming Britain's decision to go to war on a press secretary who "sexed up" intelligence reports.

But would the Guardian have condoned suicide? "Let's just say," says Mrs VonBerg, "that it would not follow the teachings of the Baha'i faith."

Comments

January 27. On this date in 1931, Effie Baker arrived in Haifa. She was an Australian photographer who became a Bahá'í in 1922. Some of the pictures she took of the Bahá'í monuments in Iraq and Iran were included in Shoghi Effendi's translation of Nabíl-i-A'zam's "The Dawn-Breakers".

Original file: 0253.html (position #22)

January 27. On this date in 1931, Effie Baker arrived in Haifa. She was an Australian photographer who became a Bahá'í in 1922. Some of the pictures she took of the Bahá'í monuments in Iraq and Iran were included in Shoghi Effendi's translation of Nabíl-i-A`zam's *The Dawn-Breakers*.

On September 3, 1892, a few months after Bahá'u'lláh's death, Nabíl-i-A'ẓam, the author of *The Dawn-breakers*, died. Parts of his body and clothing were found washed up on the coast in Acre. While Bahá'í sources attribute his death to suicide, other sources claim he was murdered.

Sources that allege Nabíl-i-A'ẓam was murdered base their claim on the allegation that he became a victim due to his support of Mírzá Muhammad `Alí in his conflict with 'Abdu'l-Bahá...

> *According to the memoirs of Baha's son Mirza Badiullah surnamed the Most Luminous Branch (غصن/نور) by Baha: One year after Baha's death, Nabil visited Badiullah in Haifa. He was distressed. Nabil said to Badiullah: "I can no longer stay at Acre. The situation there has deteriorated. By dint of violence, abusive language and cursing, one has to act against his own faith, has to regard and hold the Most Mighty Branch [Ghusn-i Azam, i.e. Abdul Baha Abbas] superior in station to the Blessed Beauty [Janab-i Mubarak, i.e. Baha] has to write corrupted [versions of] all the holly writings and epistles, and has to vilify and excommunicate [Baha's] sons, [Baha's] words and [Baha's] family [i.e. all the members of Baha's household in opposition to Abdul Baha Abbas], failing which one is branded as covenant-breaker [Naqiz] or Vacillator [Mutezalzil, i.e. opposed to Abdul Baha Abbas and partisan of Muhammad Ali] and becomes the object of untold calumnies and falsehoods."* ***Nabil requested Badiullah to find him a suitable room at the foot of Mount Carmel. He went back to Acre to fetch his things. Nothing was heard of him for sometime. Later "limbs of his body and his clothing" were discovered near the see shores at Acre. These were collated together and buried. Abdul Baha Abbas "shed crocodile tears" during the burial service of Nabil, "although he was exceedingly annoyed with him."***

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled "NABIL-E AʿẒAM ZARANDI, MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD"...

> ***NABIL-E AʿẒAM ZARANDI, MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD*** *(ملّا محمد نبیل اعظم زرندی), Persian Bahai poet, teacher, and chronicler of Babi history (b. Zarand, 18 Ṣafar 1247/29 July 1831; d. ʿAkkā, Palestine, 10 Ṣafar 1310/3 September 1892).*
>
> *Nabil converted to Babism around 1847 and in 1858 accepted the faith of Bahā'-Allāh. Born into a humble family in Zarand, he received traditional education in his childhood and worked as a shepherd in his youth, when he converted to Babism (Zarandi, p. 434). Later in his life, he studied the writings of the Bāb and became*

well versed in both Islamic and Bahai literature.

During his years as a Babi, Nabil traveled to Lorestan, Kermanshah, Tehran, and Khorasan; he met with the Babis and Babi leaders in those provinces to foster the Babi ideology and inspire the believers to arise, consolidate, and expand the new Babi communities. He also transcribed and distributed Babi literature among the rank and file of the society to promote the Babi faith. He was jailed in Sāva for four months because of his pro-Babi activities. In September 1854, he set out for Baghdad and Karbala, where he stayed until October 1856. During late 1856 to July 1858, he traveled to Hamadan, his hometown Zarand, and many major Babi communities in the capital province and returned to Baghdad on 19 July 1858 (Rafati, pp. 30-31).

Nabil was one of the Babi leaders who claimed to be the promised messianic figure according to the Bāb's prophecies, but he withdrew his claim when he recognized Bahā'-Allāh's status as the fulfillment of the Bāb's predictions and the leader of the Babis (Taherzadeh, p. 202). Nabil became one of Bahā'-Allāh's earliest followers, in 1858 in Baghdad.

Nabil's life as a Bahai is summed up in his extensive travels throughout Iran, Iraq, Turkey, the Caucasus, Egypt, and Palestine. In his early travels as a Bahai, he met with the Babi communities to invite them to the Bahai faith; he attracted the Babi leaders to the recognition of Bahā'-Allāh as the fulfillment of the Bāb's prophecies concerning the promised messianic figure and helped reinforce the belief of the new Bahais in the teachings and principles that were being advanced by Bahā'-Allāh. Through these activities, Nabil turned into an outstanding teacher, defender, and promulgator of the Bahai faith.

While Nabil was in Khorasan in spring 1866, at his suggestion, the greeting Allāho abhā (God is the most glorious) was adopted by the followers of Bahā'-Allāh, replacing the old salutation of Allāho Akbar (God is the greatest), which was common among the Babis (Shoghi Effendi, p. 176). This was a significant action that gave group identity to the Bahais and was a sign of their independence from the Babis and the Azalis, a Bābi faction that considered Mirzā Yaḥyā Ṣobḥ-e Azal (d. 1912) as the legitimate successor to the Bāb.

Nabil was the first Bahai to perform pilgrimage (ḥajj) to the house of the Bāb in Shiraz in fall 1866, in accordance with the rites prescribed in the Surat al-ḥajj revealed by Bahā'-Allāh. He also went to Baghdad and performed the pilgrimage

to the House of Bahā ʾ-Allāh in spring 1867, according to another sura witten by Bahā ʾ-Allāh for that purpose (Rafati, p. 36). Nabil's pilgrimage to those two houses marked the inception of pilgrimage laws ordained by Bahā ʾ-Allāh later in his Ketāb-e aqdas (Shoghi Effendi, pp. 176-77).

Another historic mission undertaken by Nabil under Bahā ʾ-Allāh's instruction was his travel to Egypt to appeal to the officials for the release of several Bahais who had been imprisoned in Cairo at the instigation of their enemies (Shoghi Effendi, p. 178). Nabil's mission resulted in his own imprisonment for two months in Cairo in spring 1868 and then in the Alexandria jail for a few more months. After being released, Nabil traveled to Cyprus and Beirut, and then he joined Bahā ʾ-Allāh's exiled community in Acre (ʿAkkā) in late October 1869. He spent much of the last two decades of his life in Acre and its surrounding areas.

After the passing of Bahā ʾ-Allāh in 1892, Nabil was chosen by ʿAbd-al-Bahā ʾ to prepare a text for recitation in his tomb (Shoghi Effendi, p. 222). Nabil selected four passages from Bahā ʾ-Allāh's own works and composed the text, which is known as the Ziārat-nāma (ʿAndalib 18/71, summer 1999, pp. 19-20). The impact of the passing of Bahā ʾ-Allāh on Nabil was so great and inconsolable that he drowned himself in the sea at Acre circa 10 Ṣafar 1310/3 September 1892. He is buried in the Acre cemetery.

Nabil was the recipient of a number of Bahā ʾ-Allāh's best-known works, including Surat al-dam (1866), Surat al-ḥajj, for the house of the Bāb in Shiraz (1866), and Surat al-ḥajj, for the house of Bahā ʾ-Allāh in Baghdad (1867).

When Shoghi Effendi (d. 1957) designated nineteen prominent early Bahais as the "Apostles [Ḥawāriyun] of Bahā ʾ-Allāh," Nabil was one of them (The Bahá ʾí World III, pp. 80-81). The title signifies the recognition of distinguished services that those nineteen loyal and devoted Persian Bahais have rendered to their faith.

Nabil's works are in poetry and prose. He was a gifted, prolific poet, who devoted most of his poetry to the historical events in the Babi and Bahai faiths. His most famous poem in couplet form (maṯnawi) about the history of the Bahai faith was published as Maṯnawi-e Nabil Zarandi in Cairo in 1924 in 65 pages and reprinted in Langenhain in 1995. In this maṯnawi he describes major historical events from the early days of the Babi movement to the year 1869. His second maṯnawi, in 666 verses, deals with Bahā ʾ-Allāh's banishment from Edirne to Acre. Other historical poetry of Nabil consists of his maṯnawi titled "Maṯnawi-e weṣāl wa hejr" in 175

verses (pub. in Rafati, 2014, Chap. 6; Ḏokā ’i, p. 416) and his maṯnawi on the life of Āqā Moḥammad Nabil Akbar Qā ’eni in 303 verses (Ḵušahā-i az ḵarman-e adab wa honar 13, pp. 108-16). In addition to those maṯnawis, Nabil left behind a great collection of poetry in different forms, only a fraction of which has been published.

Nabil’s works in prose include a treatise on the Babi-Bahai calendar, a treatise on Bahai inheritance laws (Fāżel Māzandarāni, IV pp. 1, 214), and his account on the event of the passing of Bahā ’-Allāh (Nabil Zarandi, Maṯnawi-e Nabil Zarandi, Langenhain, 1995, pp. 67-108). But Nabil’s most celebrated work is Maṭāle ‘ al-anwār, an extensive historical narrative of the Babi faith, written in Acre in 1888-90, which was edited and translated into English by Shoghi Effendi as The Dawn-Breakers. The work was first published in the United States in 1932.

Maṭāle ‘ al-anwār, the most authentic and the main primary source on the early history of the Babi movement in Iran, is regarded by the Bahais as the definitive account of the Bāb’s dispensation. The work has been translated into many languages, and it has played a major role in familiarizing the Bahais around the world with the historical background of their faith and helping them understand its link to the socio-religious climate of the Persian society in the early days of its development. The original Persian manuscript of Maṭāle ‘ al-anwār, preserved at the International Bahai Archives in Haifa, comprises 1,014 pages of 22-24 lines.

Bibliography:

‘Abd-al-Bahā ’, Memorials of the Faithful, tr. and annotated Marzieh Gail, Wilmette, 1971, pp. 32-36.

Abu’l-Qāsem Afnān, Ḵušahā-i az ḵarman-e adab wa honar 7, 1996, pp. 58-75.

Bahā ’-Allāh, Āṯār-e qalam-e a ‘lā, Tehran, 1996, IV, pp. 59-67, 75-99.

The Bahá ’í World: A Biennial International Record III, New York, 1928-30.

H. M. Balyuzi, Baháulláh the King of Glory, Oxford, 1991 (see index).

Idem, Materials for the Study of the Babí Religion, Cambridge, 1918, pp. 351-57. Ne ‘mat-Allāh Ḏokā ’i Bayżā ’i, Taḏkera-ye šo ‘arā-ye qarn-e awwal-e Bahā ’i,” 4 vols., Tehran, 1970-73, III, pp. 410-35.

‘Abd-al-Ḥamid Ešrāq Ḵāvari, Tasbiḥ wa taḥlil, Tehran, 1973, pp. 77-90.

Fāżel Māzandarāni, Amr wa ḵalq, Langenhain, 1986.

Hušang Goharriz, Ḥawāriyun-e Ḥażrat-e Bahā'-Allāh, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 176-91.

Ḵušahā-i az ḵarman-e adab wa honar 7, 1996, pp. 293-98.

Moojan Momen, "The Apostles of Bahā'-Āllāh" in H. M. Balyuzi, Eminent Baháís in the Time of Baháulláh: With Some Historical Background, Oxford, 1985.

Mollā Moḥammad Nabil Zarandi, Maṭāle' al-anwār: Tāriḵ-e Nabil Zarandi, ed. and tr. Shoghi Effendi, as The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation, Wilmette, 1974, pp. 433-45.

Ṣadri Nawwābzāda Ardakāni, "Maṭāleb-i dr bāra-ye tāriḵ-e- Nabil Zarandi," Moṭāla'a-ye ma'āref-e Bahā'i, Tehran, 1977.

Payām-e Bahā'i, no. 126, May 1990, pp. 13-16.

Vahid Rafati, "Nabíl-e-A'ẓam Zarandí," Ḵušahā-i az ḵarman-e adab wa Honar 7, 1996, pp. 29-57. Idem, "Tāriḵ-e Nabil Zarandi," ibid, pp. 76-87. Idem, "Maṯnawi-e Nabil-e A'ẓam

Zarandi: Dar šarḥ-e ḥālāt-e Janāb Āqā Moḥammad Nabil Akbar Qā'eni," Ḵušahā-i az ḵarman-e adab wa honar 13, 2002, pp. 107-19. Idem, ed., Yād-nāma-ye Ešrāq Ḵāvari / Remembrance of Ishráq Khávarí, Madrid, 2014.

Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, Wilmette, 1999.

Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Bahaullah, Oxford, 1974, pp. 202-6.

(Vahid Rafati)

Originally Published: June 29, 2016

Last Updated: June 29, 2016

Cite this entry:

Vahid Rafati, "NABIL-E A'ẒAM ZARANDI, MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD," Encyclopædia Iranica, online edition, 2016, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nabil-zarandi

Comments

January 27. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "We must supplicate Bahá'u'lláh to assist us to overcome the failings in our own characters, and also exert our own will power in mastering ourselves."

Original file: 0252.html (position #21)

January 27. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "We must supplicate Bahá'u'lláh to assist us to overcome the failings in our own characters, and also exert our own will power in mastering ourselves."

> *The believers, as we all know, should endeavour to set such an example in their personal lives and conduct that others will feel impelled to embrace a Faith which reforms human character. However, unfortunately, not everyone achieves easily and rapidly the victory over self. What every believer, new or old, should realize is that the Cause has the spiritual power to re-create us if we make the effort to let that power influence us, and the greatest help in this respect is prayer. We must supplicate Bahá'u'lláh to assist us to overcome the failings in our own characters, and also exert our own will power in mastering ourselves.*
>
> *(To an individual believer dated 27 January 1945)*

Comments

January 28. On this date in 1901, May Ellis Bolles wrote Agnes Alexander "My precious Sister! Praise be to God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth."

Original file: 0251.html (position #20)

January 28. On this date in 1901, May Ellis Bolles wrote Agnes Alexander "My precious Sister! Praise be to God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth."

> *January 28, 1901*
>
> *"My precious Sister!*
>
> *"Praise be to God that He has enlightened your heart in these wonderful days of*

the Coming of His Kingdom, and that He has in His Mercy guided you to the Truth.

"Please God we may soon welcome you in our midst in Paris and that you may then receive the full Revelation, and much help and instruction. . . .

"My Lord appeared to me in a vision twice, two years before I heard the Great Message, and when, by the great bounty of God, and without regard to my unworthiness, I was permitted to be among the first Americans to visit 'Akká — I beheld my dear Lord, I knew Him by my visions. . . .

"I feel by your beautiful letter that God has chosen you to be a servant in His blessed Vineyard, and that you will be greatly blessed.

"I am longing with great love to see you, to greet you in the Truth, that you may enter with your brothers and sisters in this city into the full joy and peace. . . .

"I am your loving and devoted sister in the love and service of our Lord.

(signed) May Ellis Bolles"10

1 0 May Ellis Bolles (1870-1940), later to become Mrs. William Sutherland Maxwell, was taught the Faith by Lua Getsinger in 1898. In December of that year she was in the first party of Western pilgrims to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha and wrote a moving account of that experience in An Early Pilgrimage. She is the mother of Mary Maxwell, who became Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, the wife of Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith (1921-57). 'Abdu'l-Baha once said of May Maxwell: "Whoever meets her feels from her association the susceptibilities of the Kingdom. Her company uplifts and develops the soul." (Quoted in Star of the West, 10:13, p. 247). She died in 1940, only a month after reaching her pioneering post in Buenos Aires, Argentina — the second American to be designated a martyr by Shoghi Effendi (the first was Keith Ransom-Kehler).

Comments

January 28. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children" and "A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage."

Original file: 0250.html (position #19)

January 28. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer wherein they note that "Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children," "A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage," and that "Sterilization...is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason."

> *1163. Husband and Wife to Decide How Many Children to Have*
>
> *"There is nothing in the Sacred Writings specifically on the subjects of birth control, abortion or sterilization, but* ***Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children,*** *and it is to this primary purpose that the beloved Guardian alludes in many of the letters which*

> *are quoted in the compilation. This does not imply that a couple are obliged to have as many children as they can; the Guardian's secretary clearly stated on his behalf, in answer to an enquiry, that it was for the husband and wife to decide how many children they would have.* ***A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage unless, of course, there were some medical reason why such a decision would be required.***
>
> *"You and your husband, therefore, should have no feeling that you are obliged to add to your already large family. This is a matter entirely for you to decide, and there are many methods of preventing conception, including self-discipline and restraint, to which you can have recourse.* ***Sterilization,*** *however, would be a more far-reaching action than any of these, with implications and results beyond those necessary for the immediate purpose of limiting the size of your family, and* ***is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason.***"
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 28, 1977)*

When reading this note in *Lights of Guidance*, I am drawn to the entries preceding and following this one.

The preceding note states "**Birth control, however, when exercised in order to deliberately prevent the procreation of any children is against the spirit of the Law of Bahá'u'lláh, which defines the primary purpose of marriage to be the rearing of children and their spiritual training in the Cause**"

> *1163. Husband and Wife to Decide How Many Children to Have*
>
> *"There is nothing in the Sacred Writings specifically on the subjects of birth control, abortion or sterilization, but Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children, and it is to this primary purpose that the beloved Guardian alludes in many of the letters which are quoted in the compilation. This does not imply that a couple are obliged to have as many children as they can; the Guardian's secretary clearly stated on his behalf, in answer to an enquiry, that it was for the husband and wife to decide how many children they would have. A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the*

primary purpose of marriage unless, of course, there were some medical reason why such a decision would be required.

"You and your husband, therefore, should have no feeling that you are obliged to add to your already large family. This is a matter entirely for you to decide, and there are many methods of preventing conception, including self-discipline and restraint, to which you can have recourse. Sterilization, however, would be a more far-reaching action than any of these, with implications and results beyond those necessary for the immediate purpose of limiting the size of your family, and is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 28, 1977)

The following notes state

1164. Vasectomy to Avoid Having Unwanted Children Not Permitted if It Results in Permanent Sterility

"Directly to your question ***about having a vasectomy, in general it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of avoiding having unwanted children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility.*** *While circumstances might exist in which sterilization would be justified, this does not appear to be the case with you."*

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 30, 1974)

1165. Tubal Ligation

"The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of April 29 asking about ***tubal ligation*** *and has noted that you are familiar with general Bahá'í principles on the subject. However, it has directed us to say that under normal circumstances it is* ***not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility.***"

> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 28, 1978)*

Comments

January 28. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "Sterilization...is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason."

Original file: 0249.html (position #18)

January 28. On this date in 1977, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer wherein they note that "Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children," "A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage," and that "Sterilization...is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason."

> *1163. Husband and Wife to Decide How Many Children to Have*
>
> *"There is nothing in the Sacred Writings specifically on the subjects of birth control, abortion or sterilization, but* ***Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children,*** *and it is to this primary purpose that the beloved Guardian alludes in many of the letters which are quoted in the compilation. This does not imply that a couple are obliged to have as many children as they can; the Guardian's secretary clearly stated on his behalf, in answer to an enquiry, that it was for the husband and wife to decide how many children they would have.* ***A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage unless, of course, there were***

> ***some medical reason why such a decision would be required.***
>
> *"You and your husband, therefore, should have no feeling that you are obliged to add to your already large family. This is a matter entirely for you to decide, and there are many methods of preventing conception, including self-discipline and restraint, to which you can have recourse.* ***Sterilization,*** *however, would be a more far-reaching action than any of these, with implications and results beyond those necessary for the immediate purpose of limiting the size of your family, and* ***is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason.***"
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 28, 1977)*

When reading this note in *Lights of Guidance*, I am drawn to the entries preceding and following this one.

The preceding note states "**Birth control, however, when exercised in order to deliberately prevent the procreation of any children is against the spirit of the Law of Bahá'u'lláh, which defines the primary purpose of marriage to be the rearing of children and their spiritual training in the Cause**"

> *1163. Husband and Wife to Decide How Many Children to Have*
>
> *"There is nothing in the Sacred Writings specifically on the subjects of birth control, abortion or sterilization, but Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children, and it is to this primary purpose that the beloved Guardian alludes in many of the letters which are quoted in the compilation. This does not imply that a couple are obliged to have as many children as they can; the Guardian's secretary clearly stated on his behalf, in answer to an enquiry, that it was for the husband and wife to decide how many children they would have. A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage unless, of course, there were some medical reason why such a decision would be required.*
>
> *"You and your husband, therefore, should have no feeling that you are obliged to add to your already large family. This is a matter entirely for you to decide, and*

there are many methods of preventing conception, including self-discipline and restraint, to which you can have recourse. Sterilization, however, would be a more far-reaching action than any of these, with implications and results beyond those necessary for the immediate purpose of limiting the size of your family, and is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 28, 1977)

The following notes state

1164. Vasectomy to Avoid Having Unwanted Children Not Permitted if It Results in Permanent Sterility

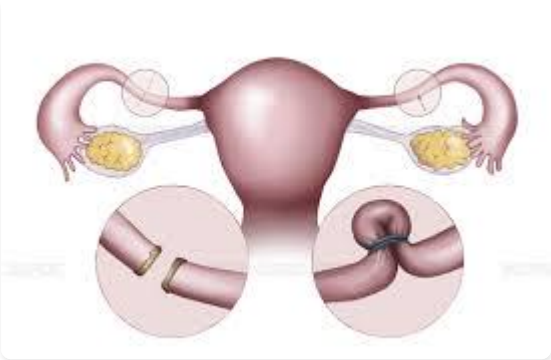
"Directly to your question ***about having a vasectomy, in general it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of avoiding having unwanted children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility.*** *While circumstances might exist in which sterilization would be justified, this does not appear to be the case with you."*

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 30, 1974)

1165. Tubal Ligation

"The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of April 29 asking about ***tubal ligation*** *and has noted that you are familiar with general Bahá'í principles on the subject. However, it has directed us to say that under normal circumstances it is* ***not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility.***"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 28, 1978)



Comments

January 28. On this date in 1956, the Bahá'í composer, conductor and arranger Tom Price was born. As director The Voices of Bahá, he has directed concerts in more than forty countries. He was also the director of the choir and symphony orchestra for the second World Congress in New York in 1992.

January 28. On this date in 1956, the Bahá'í composer, conductor and arranger Tom Price was born. As director The Voices of Bahá, he has directed concerts in more than forty countries. He was also the director of the choir and symphony orchestra for the second World Congress in New York in 1992.

Comments

January 28. On this date in 1924, Isabella D. Brittingham died. An early American Bahá'í, she converted after attending a course of "Truth Seeker" classes taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in New York City in 1898. She was posthumously named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi.

Original file: 0247.html (position #16)

January 28. On this date in 1924, Isabella D. Brittingham died. An early American Bahá'í, she converted after attending a course of "Truth Seeker" classes taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla in New York City in 1898. She was posthumously named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi.

Isabella Matilda Davis Brittingham was born on February 21, 1852 in Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of Benjamin Davis, a farmer, lumberman, and teacher. He was in turn a

grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence–John Morton–and was a staunch Presbyterian, serving as an elder of local Presbyterian churches for sixty years wherever he lived. Her mother was Elizabeth Nicholson Hamill, also of Pennsylvania Presbyterian descent. Brittingham was the youngest of seven children. On 10 November 1886 she married James Francis Brittingham (1855-1940), a devoted Episcopalian from Princess Anne, Maryland. He was a railroad employee, which resulted in frequent moves for the couple. They resided in Pocomoke, MD, until 1895; greater New York City until 1901; Johnstown, N.Y., until 1904; Seabright and Orange, N. J. until 1909. They never had children.

In the summer of 1897 James's sister, Charlotte E. Dixon, heard of the Bahá'í Faith in Chicago and accepted it. She immediately wrote James about it, but in an indirect fashion, because she did not want his strong Episcopal beliefs to prejudice him against the new Faith. Isabella was much more receptive and when Ibrahim Kheiralla, who first brought the Bahá'í Faith to the United States, went to New York to teach his Bahá'í lessons there, starting in February 1898, both Brittinghams were members of his first class. They soon became active Bahá'ís and began to teach the Faith to the other members of Grace Episcopal Church in Union, New Jersey. The result was the conversion of several families and the establishment of the Bahá'í community of northern Hudson County, New Jersey. In late 1899 the "North Hudson" Bahá'ís, as they called themselves, organized themselves into a community; Edward Getsinger, who visited the community after his pilgrimage to Akka, appointed a Board of Counsel of five men, including James Brittingham. Even though Isabella was not a member of the Board, she was made its corresponding secretary. When the Brittinghams moved to Johnstown, New York, west of Albany, in late 1900 they started building a Bahá'í community there as well. In November 1900 Mírzá Asadu'lláh and Haji Hassan-i-Khurásání visited the Brittinghams there and deepened their knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith.

In September 1901 Isabella Brittingham went on pilgrimage, visiting 'Abdu'l-Bahá for several days. The knowledge of the Faith she gained helped her complete a book, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in a Sequence of Four Lessons,* published by the Bahá'í Publishing Society of Chicago in 1902 and subsequently issued in at least nine editions through 1920. The lessons were Brittingham's own expansion of the last four lessons Kheiralla taught, but with some important additions. Brittingham was a theological liberal; she praised new religious movements that Kheiralla condemned, indicated belief in the theory of evolution (which Kheiralla rejected), and accepted higher biblical criticism (which Kheiralla never understood). Much of the book is a compilation of biblical prophecies that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá claimed to fill; it also offered the American Bahá'ís one of the

first accurate summaries of the life of Bahá'u'lláh available in English.

In addition to her book, Brittingham became an early traveling teacher for the Bahá'í Faith, making her perhaps the most prominent American Bahá'í woman in the 1900-12 period, and a prominent and highly respected American Bahá'í teacher right up to her death in 1924. Many of her talks were preserved in typed form; they reveal a consistent focus on the spiritual growth of the individual, and a desire to combat misunderstanding of the Bahá'í teachings, such as psychic interpretations of spirituality. She was also in frequent communication with 'Abdu'l-Bahá; the Bahá'í National Archives in Wilmette, Ill., contains about fifty-five tablets addressed to her.

In 1905 Brittingham attended the first Nineteen-day Feast held in North America, sponsored by the New York City Bahá'í Board of Counsel. In early 1906 she traveled to every major Bahá'í community in the Midwest to promote the new institution of the Nineteen-day Feast; in early 1907 she traveled over eight thousand miles in four and a half months, visited twenty Bahá'í communities, and as she herself noted, "slept in over forty beds" in order to establish Feast on the Pacific coast and in the Mountain states.

In 1910 Brittingham began to correspond regularly with Bahá'í women in Iran, encouraging them to strive to become equal to Iranian men. Her indirect role in the development of the Iranian Bahá'í community has not previously been recognized. She played a major part in bringing into the Faith three of the four American Bahá'í women who settled in Tehran between 1909 and 1911: Dr. Susan Moody, who became a Bahá'í during Brittingham's 1903 visit to Chicago; Brittingham's sister's daughter, Elizabeth Stewart; and Lillian Kappes, one of the former members of Grace Episcopal Church.

Throughout the 'teens Brittingham traveled to teach the Faith, especially in the Pacific states and the Southwest. In Douglas, Arizona, she established an active Bahá'í community; there she brought back into the Bahá'í Faith Mrs. Nellie Stevison French, who had become disillusioned with it as a result of the moral conduct of Ibrahim Kheiralla. Mrs. French later became an important writer, editor, administrator, and teacher of the Faith. When Brittingham's health began to decline she settled in Philadelphia, where the Revell family cared for her; in their home she died of a heart attack on January 28, 1924. Her husband remained an active Bahá'í in the New York City area until his death on July 24, 1940.

Comments

January 29. On this date in 1984, Edith May Miller Danielsen passed away. She had been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to the Cook Islands.

January 29. On this date in 1984, Edith May Miller Danielsen passed away. She had been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her pioneering work to the Cook Islands. "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh" was a title conferred to Bahá'ís who introduced the Bahá'í Faith to new territories during the Ten Year Crusade.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other

Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights.

St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

January 29. On this date in 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. A Bahá'í, the description of her life in Esther Schor's "Bridge of Words" might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Original file: 0245.html (position #14)

January 29. On this date in 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December 1938, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

> *'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.*

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

> *Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.*

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

> *...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.*
>
> *Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:*
>
> > *EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO*

> *CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.*

His response was decisive:

> *APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]*

Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:

> *REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.*

She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced fellahin, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.

She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.

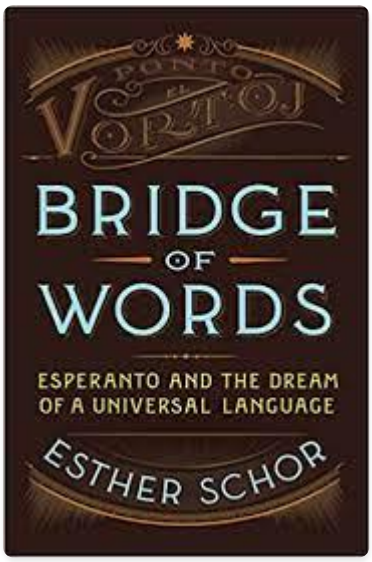
From the following section:

> *Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:*
>
> > *Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]*
>
> *In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.*

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

> *A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:*

> *HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]*
>
> *She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.*



Comments

January 29. On this date in 2001, the UHJ sent an email providing an overview of the various components of the Continental Board of Counsellors and their functioning. Pictured here is 'Ali-Akbar Furutan with members of the UHJ, ITC, and Continental Counsellors in January 2001.

Original file: 0244.html (position #13)

January 29. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice sent an email providing an overview of the various components of the Continental Board of Counsellors and their functioning. Pictured here is Hand of the Cause of God 'Ali-Akbar Furutan (front row, center) with members of the Universal House of Justice, International Teaching Centre, and Continental Counsellors standing on the stairs in front of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, January 2001.

On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice sent an email providing an overview of the various components of the Continental Board of Counsellors and their functioning.

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God", the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities. Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.

Comments

January 30. On this date in in 1926, Martha Root secured the first of her eight meetings with Queen Marie of Romania Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to her as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá’í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim.

Original file: 0243.html (position #12)

January 30. On this date in in 1926, Martha Root secured the first of her eight meetings with Queen Marie of Romania, which occurred from January 1926 through February 1936. Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to her as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá’í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim.

> *"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my*

> *mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."*

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, on April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, titled "Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania"...

> *Martha Root reported to Shoghi Effendi the account of the first of her eight interviews with Queen Marie of Rumania, which took place on January 30, 1926, in Controceni Palace in Bucharest, at the request of the Queen herself, after she had received Dr. Esslemont's book, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, sent to her by Martha. The Queen had evidently been attracted to the Teachings and when it was bruited about that she might visit North America, Shoghi Effendi wrote to the American National Spiritual Assembly the following instructions, conveyed in the writing of his secretary, on August 21, 1926: "We read in The Times that Queen Marie of Rumania is coming to America. She seems to have obtained a great interest in the Cause. So we must be on our guard lest we do an act which may prejudice her and set her back. Shoghi Effendi desires, that in case she takes this trip, the friends will behave with great reserve and wisdom, and that no initiative be taken on the part of the friends except after consulting the National Assembly."*

MARTHA ROOT
Lioness at the Threshold
by M. R. GARIS
CHAMPION BUILDER BOOKS

Comments

January 30. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "Shadow of war's tragic aftermath is deepening. Initial stage of colossal task undertaken in European continent still in balance."

January 30. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "Shadow of war's tragic aftermath is deepening. Initial stage of colossal task undertaken in European continent still in balance."

> *Call to Fuller Participation*
>
> *Acclaim with grateful heart evidences of steadily accelerating movement of pioneers, multiplication of conferences, consolidation of activities of national committees, progress in preliminaries of internal ornamentation of Temple, and formulation of teaching policy in southern states. Overwhelmed by tributes paid my own humble efforts by stalwart company whose championship of Faith of Bahá'u'lláh during last quarter century provided greatest support and solace, enabling me to sustain the weight of cares and responsibilities of Guardianship&oldid=745828715).*

> *Impelled to plead afresh to ponder responsibilities incurred in transatlantic field of service. Time is flying. First year of Second Seven Year Plan is drawing to a close. Shadow of war's tragic aftermath is deepening. Initial stage of colossal task undertaken in European continent still in balance. Urge stress for entire community extreme urgency to reinforce promptly, at whatever cost, however inadequate the instruments, the number of volunteers, both settlers and itinerant teachers, whom posterity will rightly recognize as vanguard of torch-bearers of Bahá'u'lláh's resistless, world-redeeming order to despairing millions of diversified races, conflicting nationalities in darkest, most severely tested, spiritually depleted continent of globe. Prayerfully awaiting response by all ranks of community to supreme call to fuller participation in glorious enterprise.*
>
> *[January 30, 1947]*

Comments

January 30. On this date in 2006, the NSA of the U.S. wrote regarding its "decision to cease to distribute books and other items handled by Kalima´t Press...in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books...harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith."

Original file: 0241.html (position #10)

January 30. On this date in 2006, the NSA of the U.S. wrote regarding its "decision to cease to distribute books and other items handled by Kalima´t Press...in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books over the years that include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith."

> *Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly to an individual, January 2006*
>
> *January 30, 2006*

Dear Baha´'i´ Friend,

The National Spiritual Assembly has received your email messages of December 31, 2005 and January 10, 2006 and appreciates the concerns you have shared in response to its decision to cease to distribute books and other materials published, produced or marketed by Kalima´t Press. First, we wish to assure you that the National Assembly has no issues with your titles ____. As you state, the manuscripts for these books were properly submitted to the National Assembly for literature review and subsequently passed.

Our decision to cease to distribute books and other items handled by Kalima´t Press was reached, as indicated in our December 29, 2005 letter to all Local Spiritual Assemblies, not so much because of any specific titles but rather in light of the pattern and motives of Kalima´t Press in promoting books over the years that include material that is harmful to the interests of the Baha´'i´ Faith. *You have, in your own letter, given a good assessment of the problems inherent in such action. However, continued support of Kalima´t Press under these circumstances, through distribution of its products, would be illogical and contradictory to the principles and purposes of a Baha´'i´ institution.*

Regarding your suggestion that the National Assembly identify for the friends those titles that it finds inimical to the interests of the Faith, we are sure you will appreciate upon reflection that we are not interested in creating a list of banned books. ***As to the distribution of those titles of which the Assembly approves, this has been the approach for a number of years and has only emboldened and enabled Kalima´t Press to carry more harmful titles.*** *Individuals are entirely free to purchase any books and other items they choose through Kalima´t Press or any other publisher or distributor. The National Assembly has simply taken the step of terminating institutional support of a company that has for many years exhibited a disregard for the repeated guidance and admonishments of Baha´'i´ institutions to disengage itself from affiliation with and promotion of material that harms the Faith to which it professes allegiance.*

The National Assembly appreciates the seriousness of its decision and assures you that it was not taken precipitously. We regret the distress this action has caused you and your family, but we are confident that the steps you have already initiated to ameliorate this immediate challenge and your steadfast allegiance to the institutions of the Faith will in the end provide resolution and attract the

confirmations of the Blessed Beauty.

You and your family are lovingly remembered in our prayers. May your every devoted endeavor on behalf of the glorious Cause of the Blessed Beauty be divinely assisted and abundantly confirmed.

With loving Baha´i´ greetings,

[National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States]

Comments

January 30. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís about "certain vital requirements" of the Seven Year Plan.

January 30. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís about "certain vital requirements" of the Seven Year Plan.

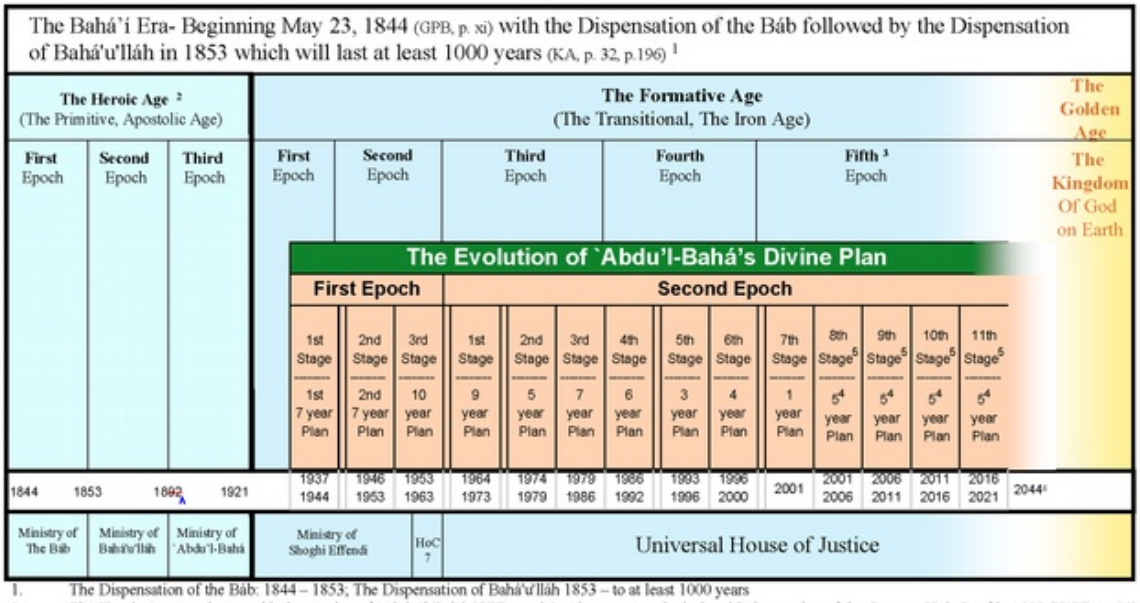
> *Certain Vital Requirements of Seven Year Plan*
>
> *30 JANUARY 1938*
>
> *The Seven Year Plan, with which the immediate fortunes of the American Bahá'í community are so closely interwoven, demands, at this critical stage in its development, serious and prayerful consideration of* ***certain vital requirements****, without which such a stupendous task can never be brought to a successful completion. The evolution of the Plan imposes a* ***threefold obligation****, which all individual believers, all Local Assemblies, as well as the National Assembly itself, must respectively recognize and conscientiously fulfil. Each and every believer, undaunted by the uncertainties, the perils and the financial stringency afflicting the nation, must arise and insure, to the full measure of his or her capacity, that* ***continuous and abundant flow of funds into the national Treasury****, on which the successful prosecution of the Plan must chiefly depend. Upon the Local Assemblies, whose special function and high privilege is to facilitate the admission of new believers into the community, and thereby*

stimulate the infusion of fresh blood into its organic institutions, a duty no less binding in character devolves. To them I wish particularly to appeal, at this present hour, when the call of God is being raised throughout the length and breadth of both continents in the New World, to ***desist from insisting too rigidly on the minor observances and beliefs, which might prove a stumbling-block in the way of any sincere applicant, whose eager desire is to enlist under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh.*** *While conscientiously adhering to the fundamental qualifications already laid down, the members of each and every Assembly should endeavor, by their patience, their love, their tact and wisdom to nurse, subsequent to his admission, the newcomer into Bahá'í maturity, and win him over gradually to the unreserved acceptance of whatever has been ordained in the teachings. As to the National Assembly, whose inescapable responsibility is to guard the integrity, coordinate the activities, and stimulate the life, of the entire community, its chief concern at the present moment should be to anxiously deliberate on how best to enable both individual believers and Local Assemblies to fulfil their respective tasks. Through their repeated appeals, through their readiness to dispel all misunderstandings and remove all obstacles, through the example of their lives, and their unrelaxing vigilance, their high sense of justice, their humility, consecration and courage, they must demonstrate to those whom they represent their capacity to play their part in the progress of the Plan in which they, no less than the rest of the community, are involved. May the all-conquering Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh be so infused into each component part of this harmoniously functioning System as to enable it to contribute its proper share to the consummation of the plan.*

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." WOB, p 102


The Bahá'í Era- Beginning May 23, 1844 (GPB, p. xi) with the Dispensation of the Báb followed by the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1853 which will last at least 1000 years (KA, p. 32, p.196) 1
The Heroic Age 2
(The Primitive, Apostolic Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
The Formative Age
(The Transitional, The Iron Age)
First Epoch
Second Epoch
Third Epoch
Fourth Epoch
Fifth 3 Epoch
The Golden Age
The Kingdom Of God on Earth
The Evolution of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan
First Epoch
Second Epoch
1st Stage 1st 7 year Plan
2nd Stage 2nd 7 year Plan
3rd Stage 10 year Plan
1st Stage 9 year Plan
2nd Stage 5 year Plan
3rd Stage 7 year Plan
4th Stage 6 year Plan
5th Stage 3 year Plan
6th Stage 4 year Plan
7th Stage 1 year Plan
8th Stage 5 5 year Plan
9th Stage 5 5 year Plan
10th Stage 5 5 year Plan
11th Stage 5 5 year Plan
1844 1853 1892 1921
1937 1944
1946 1953
1953 1963
1964 1973
1974 1979
1979 1986
1986 1992
1993 1996
1996 2000
2001
2001 2006
2006 2011
2011 2016
2016 2021
2044 6
Ministry of The Báb
Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh
Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Ministry of Shoghi Effendi
HoC 7
Universal House of Justice

1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

January 30. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote eastern Bahá’ís "The responsibilities of the members of the Spiritual Assemblies that are engaged in teaching the Cause of God in Eastern lands have been clearly laid down in the holy Texts."

Original file: 0239.html (position #8)

January 30. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote eastern Bahá’ís "The responsibilities of the members of the Spiritual Assemblies that are engaged in teaching the Cause of God in Eastern lands have been clearly laid down in the holy Texts."

> *2079. The responsibilities of the members of the Spiritual Assemblies that are engaged in teaching the Cause of God in Eastern lands have been clearly laid down in the holy Texts.*
>
> *These bid them to work towards the improvement of morals and the spread of learning; to strive to eradicate ignorance and unenlightenment, eliminate prejudice, and reinforce the foundation of true faith in people's hearts and minds; to seek to develop self-reliance and avoidance of blind imitation; to aim to enhance*

the efficient management of their affairs, and observe purity and refinement in all circumstances; to show their commitment to truthfulness and honesty, and their ability to conduct themselves with frankness, courage and resolution.

They similarly enjoin them to lend their support to agricultural and industrial development, to consolidate the foundations of mutual assistance and co-operation, to promote the emancipation and advancement of women and support the compulsory education of both sexes, to encourage application of the principles of consultation among all classes, and to adhere in all dealings to a standard of scrupulous integrity. They further impress upon them the virtue of trustworthiness and godliness, of purity of motive, kindliness of heart, and detachment from the fetters of this material world. They call upon them so to sanctify themselves that they will rise above the corrupt and evil influences that exercise so powerful a sway over the Western world, and charge them to abide by the counsel of moderation at all times and under all conditions. They urge them to make detailed inquiry into the various branches of contemporary learning--arts and sciences alike--and to concentrate their attention on serving the general interests of the people; to deepen themselves by attentive study of the sacred Texts, and to apply the divine guidance they contain to the circumstances, needs and conditions of society today; to refrain from entering into the tangled affairs of political parties and to have neither concern for, nor involvement in, the controversies of politicians, the wranglings of theologians or any of the ailing social theories current amongst men. They finally exhort them to be sincerely obedient, in both thought and word, to the laws duly enacted by the government of the realm, and to distance themselves from the methods, concepts and ill-grounded arguments of extreme traditionalists and modernists alike; to accord honour, veneration and respect to-- and endorse the efforts of-- exponents of the arts and sciences, and to esteem and revere those who are possessed of extensive knowledge and scholarly erudition; to uphold the right of freedom of conscience; and to abstain from criticizing and disparaging the manners, customs and beliefs of other individuals, peoples and nations. These are among the most pressing requirements for the nations of the East. These are the basic, the binding, the inescapable responsibilities of the trustees of the Merciful, the representatives of the Bahá'í communities, the members of the Spiritual Assemblies.

(30 January 1926 to the Spiritual Assemblies throughout the East - translated from the Persian)

Comments

January 31. On this date in 2009, two of the conferences among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Auckland, New Zealand, and one in Battambang, Cambodia.

Original file: 0238.html (position #7)

January 31. On this date in 2009, two among a series of 41 regional conferences of the Five Year Plan took place, one in Auckland, New Zealand, and one in Battambang, Cambodia.

Universal House of Justice member Peter Khan would later give a talk on July 3, 2009, later published as "Reflections on the Ridvan 2009 Message," stating,

> *As you are, I am sure, aware, that series of conferences had a galvanizing effect on the Bahá'í Community throughout the world and ultimately on the larger society. It was a tangible demonstration of the global spread of the Faith and it created a most welcome surge toward the goal of 1500 Intensive Programs of Growth by the end of the present plan.*

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are

women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the

Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

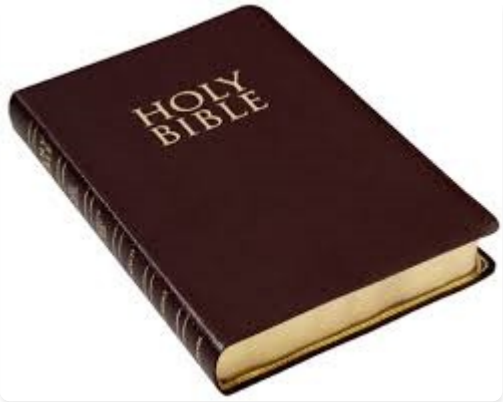
Comments

January 31. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Except for what has been explained by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we have no way of knowing what various symbolic allusions in the Bible mean."

Original file: 0237.html (position #6)

January 31. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Except for what has been explained by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we have no way of knowing what various symbolic allusions in the Bible mean."

> *Except for what has been explained by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we have no way of knowing what various symbolic allusions in the Bible mean.*
>
> *(31 January 1955 to an individual believer)*



Comments

January 31. On this date in 1983, the UHJ occupied its permanent seat. The Seat of UHJ was designed by architect Hossein Amanat, who also designed the ITC Building, the Centre for the Study of the Sacred Texts, and the Bahá'í House of Worship in Samoa. He is the brother of Abbas Amanat.

Original file: 0236.html (position #5)

January 31. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice officially occupied its permanent seat. The Seat of Universal House of Justice was designed by architect Hossein Amanat, who also designed the International Teaching Centre Building, the Centre for the Study of the Sacred Texts, and the Bahá'í House of Worship in Samoa. Hossein Amanat is the brother of Abbas Amanat, the former Bahá'í who is Professor of History & International Studies at Yale University.

Comments

January 31. On this date in 1971, the UHJ forwarded all NSAs cable from the NSA of the U.S. stating "entry by troops rapidly accelerating United States evidenced by enrollment 8000 new believers South Carolina course six weeks campaign raising number new believers entire country 13000 since Ridván.

Original file: 0235.html (position #4)

January 31. On this date in 1971, the UHJ forwarded all NSAs a cable from the NSA of the U.S. stating "Joyfully announce Bahá'í world process entry by troops rapidly accelerating United States evidenced by enrollment 8000 new believers South Carolina course six weeks campaign raising number new believers entire country 13000 since Ridván."

Acceleration of Enrollments in the United States

31 January 1971

To: All National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We share with you the text of a cable sent today to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States for publication in "Bahá'í News":

> *Joyfully announce Bahá'í world process* **entry by troops** *rapidly accelerating United States evidenced by enrollment 8000 new believers South Carolina course six weeks campaign raising number new believers entire country 13000 since Ridván. Process gathering momentum. Indications similar development occurring new areas North South America. May valiant workers Faith toiling throughout world gain confidence added strength these uplifting victories won in His name reap similar harvest homefronts all continents (Signed) Universal House of Justice.*

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Comments

January 31. On this date in 1985, the UHJ wrote "The Lesser Peace itself will pass through stages: at the initial stage the governments will act entirely on their own without the conscious involvement of the Faith; later on, in God's good time, the Faith will have a direct influence on it..."

Original file: 0234.html (position #3)

January 31. On this date in 1985, the UHJ wrote "The Lesser Peace itself will pass through stages: at the initial stage the governments will act entirely on their own without the conscious involvement of the Faith; later on, in God's good time, the Faith will have a direct influence on it in ways indicated by Shoghi Effendi in his 'The Goal of a New World Order'"

> *1430. The Lesser Peace Will Initially Be a Political Unity*

"Bahá'u'lláh's principal mission in appearing at this time in human history is the realization of the oneness of mankind and the establishment of peace among the nations; therefore, all the forces which are focused on accomplishing these ends are influenced by His Revelation. We know, however, that peace will come in stages. ***First, there will come the Lesser Peace, when the unity of nations will be achieved, then gradually the Most Great Peace-- the spiritual as well as social and political unity of mankind, when the Bahá'í World Commonwealth, operating in strict accordance with the laws and ordinances of the Most Holy Book of the Bahá'í Revelation, will have been established through the efforts of the Bahá'ís.***

"As to the ***Lesser Peace, Shoghi Effendi has explained that this will initially be a political unity arrived at by decision of the governments of various nations; it will not be established by direct action of the Bahá'í community.*** *This does not mean, however, that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of mankind. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are constantly engaged in laying the groundwork for a permanent peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal.*

*"**The Lesser Peace itself will pass through stages: at the initial stage the governments will act entirely on their own without the conscious involvement of the Faith; later on, in God's good time, the Faith will have a direct influence on it in ways indicated by Shoghi Effendi in his 'The Goal of a New World Order'.** In connection with the steps that will lead to this latter stage, the Universal House of Justice will certainly determine what has to be done, in accordance with the guidance in the Writings, such as the passage you quoted from 'Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh', page 89. In the meantime, the Bahá'ís will undoubtedly continue to do all in their power to promote the establishment of peace."*

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, January 31, 1985: Ibid.)

Comments

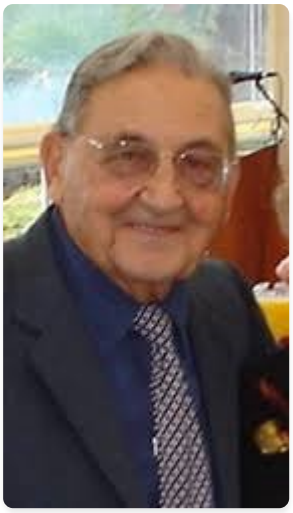
January 31. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote all NSAs, Continental Counsellors, and the ITC about "advertisements...placed by the Covenant-breaker Joel Bray Marangella, seeking to revive his claim to be the "third Guardian of the Faith." This activity could provoke questions among the friends."

Original file: 0233.html (position #2)

January 31. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies, Continental Counsellors, and the International Teaching Centre about "advertisements...placed by the Covenant-breaker Joel Bray Marangella, seeking to revive his claim to be the "third Guardian of the Faith." This activity could

provoke questions among the friends."

> *The Universal House of Justice*
>
> *Bahá'í World Centre*
>
> *Department of the Secretariat*
>
> *31 January 1997*
>
> *To National Spiritual Assemblies*
>
> *Dear Bahá'í Friends,*
>
> *In recent years advertisements have occasionally appeared in newspapers in various countries, placed by the Covenant-breaker Joel Bray Marangella, seeking to revive his claim to be the "third Guardian of the Faith." This activity could provoke questions among the friends, especially those unfamiliar with the developments associated with the actions of Mason Remey, who broke the Covenant by proclaiming himself the successor to Shoghi Effendi as Guardian. The Universal House of Justice has therefore directed us to send you a copy of a document containing background information on these developments, entitled "Mason Remey and Those Who Followed Him", which was prepared for its files some years ago. You are free to use it now or in the future, in any manner circumstances may require, to provide the friends with the facts it contains.*
>
> *With loving Bahá'í greetings,*
>
> *For Department of the Secretariat*
>
> *Enclosure*
>
> *cc: The Hands of the Cause of God*
>
> *International Teaching Centre*
>
> *Continental Counsellors*



Comments

January 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "If you find you need to visualize someone when you pray, think of the Master. Through Him you can address Bahá'u'lláh."

Original file: 0232.html (position #1)

January 31. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "If you find you need to visualize someone when you pray, think of the Master. Through Him you can address Bahá'u'lláh."

> *1493. Through Abdu'l-Bahá One Can Address Bahá'u'lláh*
>
> *"If you find you need to visualize someone when you pray, think of the Master. Through Him you can address Bahá'u'lláh. Gradually try to think of the qualities of the Manifestation, and in that way a mental form will fade out, for after all the body is not the thing, His Spirit is there and is the essential, everlasting element."*
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 31, 1949)*

Comments

Generated by HTML to PDF Ebook Converter • March 10, 2026 • Files processed in reverse order